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BIBLE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

By

DR. HERMAN BAAR

*Formerly Superintendent of the Hebrew
Orphan Asylum, New York*



New York

BLOCH PUBLISHING COMPANY

"The Jewish Book Concern"

1902

YB 21760

JACOB VOORSANGER MEMORIAL



I

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BIBLE LESSONS

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By

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*Formerly Superintendent of the Hebrew
Orphan Asylum, New York*

BOOK I.

FROM THE CREATION TO LEVITICUS XIX

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

New York

BLOCH PUBLISHING COMPANY

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1902

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To the

REV. DR. KAUFMAN KOHLER

WHOM I GREATLY ADMIRE AS A SCHOLAR, TEACHER AND TRUE
FRIEND, AND WHOSE MINISTRATIONS ARE FULL OF
LOVE FOR GOD, ISRAEL AND MANKIND

“If I open the Bible, it is to me as if I walk in a forest, full of celestial trees towering towards the infinite height. What are all the other books compared with this Book, in which every line is pervaded with the divine spirit! The rise and the fall of man, his greatness and littleness, his defeats and his victories, his yearnings and aspirations, are depicted in this grand Book. This Book cannot be measured by our little minds, it cannot be comprehended by our tiny intellects; it is gigantic and immense like the large heavens, and pictures to us the whole drama of mankind.”—HEINRICH HEINE.

Vommerger

PREFACE

It has been my purpose in preparing this history, to lay before the Jewish youth a book which, written in a simple and popular style, directly appeals to the hearts of the children, and thus seeks to interest them in Biblical studies. I have drawn from the various tales related in the Book many useful lessons, which are often illustrated by fitting examples taken from the world's history and the Talmud. I have likewise pointed or referred to different homiletic or ethical text sentences which, when properly applied and commented upon by an intelligent teacher, must be of considerable assistance in his noble work, and cannot but greatly enhance the instruction imparted to the pupils. For those, however, who understand our sacred language, I have tried to picture by a single sentence, in Hebrew, the character of the man I speak of or the period of history I describe; but to those who do not understand the holy language, the very sentence in the vernacular will, no doubt, prove to be of great advantage.

Moreover, this book can be used in places where there is neither preacher nor teacher, by our religious mothers who personally wish to instruct their children in Biblical history.

This present volume extends from the creation of the world to the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus; a second volume, comprising the time from the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus to Samuel, will follow; while a third, from Samuel to the destruction of the Temple, will complete the work. Thus in a three years' course the entire Biblical history can be imparted to the young.

I am indebted to my dear friends and cherished pupils, the Rev. Samuel Langer and Mr. Moses Beckhardt, for the kind help and assistance they have given me in revising this book and correcting its proof sheets.

Trusting this book will accomplish its objects, and will meet with every possible success, and hoping that it may find a kind reception in our homes and schools, I give it on its entry into the world my best wishes and warmest fatherly blessings!

THE AUTHOR.

NEW YORK, *August*, 1902.

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BIBLE LESSONS

I. THE CREATION

The earth we live on was not always so beautiful as it is now. There was a time when darkness was everywhere, and neither the sun by day nor the moon and stars by night shone upon the earth. Neither sky nor plant, man nor animal, was then to be seen. There was only God, our dear heavenly Father, who was the first in the beginning, and who has remained during all ages and times our Rock and Redeemer, our Hope and Comfort.

It was in the plan of God to create this wonderful world, therefore He formed heaven and earth. And as it was entirely dark upon the earth, God, the great Creator of the world, said, "Let there be light," and there was light. At once light spread its cheering rays everywhere, and God in His wisdom called the precious light "day" and the gloomy darkness "night."

On the second day God created the magnificent blue sky, which we see above our heads. From the clouds which often cover the firmament, the rain and dew, which enrich the soil, fall down to the earth.

On the third day God ordered that all the waters of the earth should be gathered together in

2 Bible Lessons

one place. This having been done, there were formed the little brooks, the rivers, and the great seas. As the waters gathered, the dry ground became visible, but all of it was barren. There was neither a green leaf, a flower, nor a tree to be seen. For this reason God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, herbs and fruit-trees." At this command the earth produced grasses and flowers, herbs, shade-trees and fruit-trees. In addition to water and air, so necessary for the life of man, animal, and plant, there was needed also for every creature the golden sunshine. For this reason God created on the fourth day the sun, the moon, and the stars.

Think of the great benefits which we get from the sun! It not merely brightens the day, and gives us the necessary warmth and comfort, but it ripens all the useful and needful products of our fields. And of no less importance is the moon. It not merely sets the time of our Sabbath and festival seasons, but when we look up at it in the evening it gives us a feeling of solemn calmness and silent rest. As for the little stars which are scattered over the heavens, it appears as if each of them is a special divine herald, announcing that the Heavenly Father above us protects, shelters, and watches in the stillness of the night all our beloved ones. The stars play a prominent part in our biblical history; they form also one of the choicest emblems upon our national flag, completing the beauty of the glorious "Star-Spangled Banner."

The earth now looked beautiful, for flowers

were blooming, brooks were running, and above in the sky the mighty sun was sending its cheerful rays in every direction. However, it was still very quiet in the created world; no animal or living thing was moving on the earth. Then on the fifth day God commanded that fish should appear in the waters and birds in the air. And so it was; the fish swam in the waters and the birds—Nature's concert-masters—chanted sweet songs from trees and bushes in honor of God.

Thus in the air above the land and in the water beneath it there was animal life; but upon the earth there was none. Then on the sixth day there were created all the animals we know of, such as the lion and the elephant, the serpent and the lamb, the hare and the hart, the horse and the camel, and others of their kind.

II. THE CREATION OF MAN

There were now plants and animals on the earth; but there was one creature yet greatly needed. It was man. Then our Heavenly Father said: "Let us make man in our Image and after our Likeness, that he may have dominion over the fish in the sea and over the fowl of the heaven, and over every living creature that creeps upon the earth." Then God created man. He formed his body out of earth, and as there was no life in him, He breathed an ever-living spirit into his soul. In order, however, that man should always remember from what he was cre-

ated and that he should not boast of his parentage and high family, God called the first man *Adam*—that is, “one who has been made of earth.” We can learn a lesson of humbleness from Adam’s origin. We should never boast of high rank or station, for we have all one common tie of relationship—our mother earth.

Adam felt himself solitary and alone, for there was no one with whom he could speak or sympathize. Then God said: “Two are always better than one, and as, moreover, it is not good that man should be alone, I shall give him a woman as a companion, who shall always be near him and help him; she shall be an *Eser* to him,” that is, a helpmate, which word confers the highest degree of nobility upon woman. God then created a wife for Adam, whom the latter called *Eve*.

When God intended to create man, it happened that troops of angels crowded around His throne. Some spoke in favor of man’s creation, while others expressed themselves strongly against it. The angel Love spoke first, saying: “O God, create him, for I will fill his heart with love, so that he may perform works of charity and kindness.” The angel Truth was opposed to God’s plan. “Do not create him,” she said, “for he will bow down to falsehood and lie, and I shall never be able to guide him.” But the angel Justice supported Love by saying that “man would cling to virtue.” The angel Peace was against the

creation of man, saying "that man would be quarrelsome and fond of strife and ever ready to spread hatred and enmity around him."

While the angels were still disputing with each other, God sent Truth down to the earth, exclaiming: "Only when Truth is flourishing on earth shall salvation be granted to man from heaven. I shall create man in spite of all dissension, in order that truth may be cultivated on earth. If, after having passed through a period of right and wrong, man will be inclined to cling strongly to truth, then the time will be near in which Love and Truth will meet together, and Justice and Peace will kiss each other."

III. THE SABBATH DAY

When God had finished the creation of the world in six days, He rested on the seventh day from all the labor He had done. The seventh day is therefore called the Sabbath day. That means the day of rest, on which man should cease from all labor. On this day we have specially to thank God by private and public devotion, in house and synagogue, for the world He has given us to live in, and for the many bountiful favors we receive hourly and daily from the ever-flowing fountain of His love.

There were once six brothers who had made up

their minds to work for the seventh one and to stay home with him on a special day (Sabbath) to enjoy his presence, his uplifting power—in fact, that solemn influence, which he knew so well to spread around him. But suddenly a change came over the brothers. Eager to become great and rich, they refused to work further for their seventh brother and resolved to leave him to his own fate, as he, so they said, was quite able to take proper care of himself. What was the result of such a step? The hallowed home in which the brothers had lived so peaceably and united, became nothing else but a place of worldly struggle and gain. No lofty ideas or noble sentiments dropped from their lips, and the power of God and the thought of His kind care and protection never entered their minds or souls. Is this not also the case with many of our co-religionists to-day?

IV. THE GARDEN OF EDEN

Our first parents, Adam and Eve, were placed in a very lovely garden called Eden. This garden had many points in common with what we call a "Kindergarten." Like children, Adam and Eve were still innocent and pure, and, moreover, they had strictly to obey without asking "Why must we do so?" The garden itself was a beautiful spot of everything that could attract the eye and entertain the senses. There were bright, sweet-smelling flowers and cool and shady bowers.

Warbling birds flitted among the trees, and prattling brooks and rivulets flowed through the garden. There were also many trees, the fruit of which Adam and Eve could eat as much as they desired.

In the midst of the garden, however, there stood a tree, which was the "tree of knowledge of good and evil," and it was the fruit of this tree which God had forbidden them to eat. Know, then, from the kindergarten up to the highest class in school, and likewise in our homes and in our country, we must obey the laws given to us. The first rule in education is to obey. In the beginning Adam and Eve were most obedient. They worked with pleasure and joy in the beautiful garden, and did everything to please God.

Suddenly, however, a different spirit must have come over them. In one of those idle hours, of which they had so many in Eden, they received a visit from the mischievous serpent. If serpents have been found in Eden, should we be astonished to see them also in places which are not so beautiful? When a person comes to us and attempts to lead us astray and to encourage us to do evil things, we usually turn our backs on him. So Adam and Eve should have done at once. However, they were too inexperienced, and therefore did not order the mischief-maker from their presence.

Feeling quite at ease, and rejoicing beforehand at the wrong it was about to do, the serpent sweetly asked Eve, "Has then, indeed, God told you not to eat of all the trees of the gar-

den?" "Of all the trees we may eat," Eve said, "except of that of good and evil, unless we wish to die." "No," said the serpent, "do not think so, you will not die; take only some of its fruit. See! the fruit is so pleasant to behold and so delicious to taste. Your eyes will then be opened and you will be equal to God, knowing what is good and bad." Eve was soon convinced, and she did not hesitate long, but took some of the forbidden fruit and ate it. As it often happens that people like to share the evil but not the good with others, so we see it here. Eve gave her husband of the forbidden fruit, and he ate of it too, and, in doing so, took part of his wife's sin upon his own shoulders.

V. THE FIRST SIN

Adam and Eve had now committed a great sin. They knew this, for their conscience, which had slept so long, reproached them very much. They now wished that they had never done the act. But alas! it was too late! They were much afraid of God, and feared His punishment. To avoid Him, they hid themselves behind the bushes. But can we indeed escape from God's presence? Does He not see us wherever we are? Then it happened that toward evening God came into the garden seeking the guilty ones. "Adam, where art thou?" He called out. "Here I am," Adam answered. "Why didst thou hide thyself before Me?" God asked. Adam replied, "I was afraid."

"Afraid of whom?" God said. "What hast thou done? Hast thou taken perhaps from the fruit I have forbidden thee to touch?" "Yes," said Adam; "my wife gave me of it and I ate." Mark how he confessed the truth, and that is always the best in life. Turning to the wife, God said, "Why didst thou induce thy husband to commit a sin?" And Eve said, "The serpent tempted me." Thus we see that one person makes another responsible for the acts he has done.

God did not wait long to punish the sinners. "Because thou hast led astray Adam and Eve," He said to the serpent, "thou shalt be cursed. In dust thou shalt crawl, and dust thou shalt eat during all the days of thy life." To Eve, God said: "As thou hast yielded to the mischievous advice of the serpent, and hast not felt any scruple in making thy husband the partner of thy sin, thou shalt suffer many violent pains during thy lifetime." But to Adam, God said: "As thou hast been disobedient, it is my will that thou shalt work very hard from this day forth. Thorns and thistles shall the ground thou tilleth bring forth, and in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou earn thy daily bread until thou returneth to dust, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Hard labor is expressed here as a punishment, but in reality it is a blessing. Nothing keeps man from mischief and sin as does hard work. If the whole world could be turned into a great workshop, the moral position of man would be much higher and nobler than it is now.

Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden, and they had children who caused them much trouble and sorrow. Home joys and home troubles with children have been experienced more or less by parents at all times. It might be thought that God should have made the punishment of Adam and Eve a little lighter, as it was their first sin. However, they enjoyed, in being admitted into the garden of Eden, the rare privilege of God's special grace and loving kindness, and for this reason it cannot be often enough repeated that the higher we stand in life, the more must it be our duty to follow all those laws which are given to us for our welfare on earth.

VI. CAIN AND ABEL

The loss of Eden must have been very painful to Adam and Eve. Still in that new home which they had to make for themselves they gradually forgot their past trouble, as happily they were blessed with children. These children, being sons, were called Cain and Abel. When they were grown up, Cain was gloomy and unfriendly, while Abel was peaceful and cheerful. Cain became a husbandman (farmer), and Abel became a shepherd. It happened once that Cain presented some of the fruits of his field-labor as an offering to God, while Abel likewise offered some of the firstlings of his flock to his Maker. Whether the offering of Cain did not come fully from his heart, or whether it was presented in a discon-

tented or moody spirit, we do not know, but the Lord rejected his gift and graciously accepted that of his brother Abel. Cain was greatly angered over this refusal and showed his disappointment in his downcast countenance. The Lord, perceiving this change in him, tried to calm him by saying: "Why art thou so downcast? If thou art good, thou canst lift up thy face, as an honest man should always do; but if not, sin lies before thy door; it is longing after thee, but thou canst rule over it."

But God's wise and kind words did not make any impression upon hardened Cain. Very soon afterward he persuaded his brother Abel to go with him to the field, and when they were there Cain killed him. Then the all-knowing God asked of Cain, "Tell me, where is thy brother Abel?" Upon which the wicked man impertinently answered, "I do not know; am I the keeper of my brother?" Then said God: "See what thou hast done! The voice of thy brother's blood cries unto me from the ground, therefore thou shalt be cursed. The earth shall not yield henceforth unto thee her produce; a fugitive and vagabond shalt thou be in the world."

Driven by bitter repentance—for "my punishment is greater than I can bear," he said—Cain moved away from the scenes of his childhood. Jealousy and envy were the causes or motives of the first murder committed in the world. Children should always look every one straight in the face. An open countenance usually shows trust and truthfulness.

God gave Adam and Eve another son, whom they called Seth. Adam died at the age of 930 years. The greatest age was reached by one of the descendants of Adam, Methusalem, who was 963 years old when he died. Cain also had a son, whom he called Enoch (Chanoch) after the name of the city he had built. One of his descendants was Lemech, whose sons were called Jabal, who was the father of those who dwelt in tents and had cattle, and Jubal, who was the father of such as play on the harp and guitar. Another son of his was Tubal-Cain, an artificer in copper and iron.

VII. NOAH AND THE FLOOD

The number of human beings was rapidly growing on the earth, and with their increase they became more sinful and wicked. How could it have been otherwise? we may ask. There were no schools, no teachings, neither religious impressions nor bright personal examples set before the eyes of the young. And yet there was one man, who, differing from all the others, still led a good and honorable life. This man was Noah, who was singled out as the only one whose life was free from blame and fault. He was the father of three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet.

When God saw that the ways of man were thoroughly evil on earth, he said to Noah: "Build thee an ark of gopher-wood and go into the same

with thy wife, thy sons, and their wives and children. Take also with you single pairs from every living animal, and, moreover, provide yourself with sufficient food for every creature in which there is breath of life. For I shall bring a great flood over the earth and will destroy all living creatures on it, for the earth is full of violence and wickedness." And Noah did as God commanded him.

After seven days had passed the fountains of the great deeps were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened, and it rained forty days and forty nights. The waters rose higher and higher, lifting up the ark far above the earth, so that all the mountains and the high hills were covered.

After one hundred and fifty days God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the flood stopped. At last the ark slowly descended and rested upon the mount of Ararat. After forty days of rest, Noah opened the window of the ark and sent forth a raven to see whether the waters were dried from off the earth; the raven, however, went to and fro and did not return. Then Noah sent the dove; but as she could not find a resting-place, she returned to the ark, and Noah then knew that the waters were still upon the earth.

He waited seven days more, and again sent forth the dove to see whether the waters had abated. This time she returned in the evening, having a plucked olive-leaf in her mouth. By this cheering token he knew that the waters had been cleared

from the earth. After seven days more, he again sent away the dove, but this time she did not return. The raven and the dove play an active part in the history of the flood. This teaches us that we should always have a kindly feeling toward the animal world. God maintains them all and gives His food to each of them, even לִבְנֵי עֹרֹב to the young ravens. Was not Elijah, the prophet, in his loneliness fed by the ravens?

At last the earth was dry again, and Noah left the ark with all that had been therein. The first step he took was to build an altar to the Lord and to thank Him for His kind and wonderful deliverance. And as a new proof of God's kindness to man, He promised Noah that in the future, on account of man, the earth and its inhabitants would not be punished again by so great a flood, and that seed-time and harvest, frost and heat, summer and winter, day and night should never cease. As a sign of this promise God put the beautifully colored rainbow in the sky to testify that the waters should never more become a deluge to destroy all living things.

Noah was the first to plant a vineyard. When it was grown, he drank from the wine, and, not knowing its powerful effect, he took more of it than was necessary. On account of this, his second son, Ham, ridiculed him, while his two other sons, Shem and Japhet, with true tenderness of heart, tried to cover the failings of their erring father. When the father awoke from his sleep and learned what had happened, he blessed his two good sons and

rebuked the one who had so unnaturally offended him. Noah was only "perfect in his time." Unlike an Abraham or Moses, he did not do much for his sinful fellow-men. Neither did he teach them, nor did he pray to God to forgive them.

VIII. BABEL

After the flood the people multiplied and increased in great numbers, and as there were no schools in which their minds could be trained and educated, they naturally had many foolish notions and ideas.

Among other things they undertook to build a city, with a big tower, the top of which would reach the sky. What their object was in building this large tower we do not exactly know. So much is certain, they were going to make for themselves by such a work a famous name, נִעֲשֶׂה קִנּוּ שֵׁם. It might have been also their purpose to keep themselves together in one special place and to use one particular language. However, this plan of theirs was upset or defeated by God. He, our Almighty Father, confused their language so that the one person could not understand the other. For the advancement of man and the world, a number of languages is most necessary. If such great conquerors as Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, and Napoleon were not able to build up, by their wonderful con-

quests, a world-kingdom, neither can mankind be raised or trained to use one common or universal language. There is only one language spoken by all men, and that is the language of the heart.

IX. ABRAM, THE MODEL MAN

Not every one is intended or is able in life to carry out a great and noble work. The Lord selects only a few individuals in whom He puts the sacred fire of His divine inspiration. Among those who were thus distinguished by God was Abram. He was the son of Terah, who besides him had two other sons, Nahor and Haran. The latter died very early, leaving behind him an orphan boy, Lot, who was cared for by Abram and Sarai, who had no children. Terah's other son, Nahor, married Haran's daughter, Milka.

Abram's father, Terah, was a worshipper of idols, who went from Ur of the Chaldees, his native place, to Haran, where he died. After his death, the Lord said to Abram, in whom, despite the example set by his late father, the true belief in one God had already taken root, "Get thee out of thy country, from thy kindred and from thy father's house, into a land which I shall show thee. I will make of thee a great nation, and I will protect thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing (וְהָיָה בְרָכָה). And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse

them that curse thee, and in thee shall all the nations of the world be blessed." In these words the great missionary task of our people to impress all the nations of the world with the true belief in one God, is clearly pointed out. Then Abram, following the command of God, departed with his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his possessions, and went into Canaan.

Abram was a kind relative and a loving uncle. His nephew, Lot, might have learned much from him, but he did not. As the Bible so wisely remarks, וַיֵּלֶךְ אַחֲרָיו לוֹט, he walked with or after him without learning or adopting any of his noble traits. Both of them, uncle and nephew, possessed large flocks, but unfortunately the shepherds of each could not agree with one another and were continually quarrelling. That was more than peace-loving Abram could tolerate. He therefore said to his nephew: "Pray let there be no strife between us, between thy shepherds and mine, for we are kinsmen. See," he continued, "the whole land lies before thee; for this reason separate thyself from me. Wilt thou go to the left, then I will go to the right, or if thou wilt go to the right, I will depart to the left."

Thus they separated from each other. Lot chose the plain of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, though he knew well that the inhabitants of these cities were extremely wicked. However, finding in these places water and pasture enough for his flocks, his selfish and greedy nature quickly stifled in him his better feeling and the higher thought that he might perhaps endanger the

character of his family and children by his new and evil surroundings.

Every bad step we take in life throws its shadow before; we should therefore think or reflect in time before we undertake any important matter. And so it was in this case. Among the kings of the country into which Lot had moved, a war broke out, in which the rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah were defeated and all of their property taken from them. Unfortunately Lot, together with everything he called his own, was likewise captured, and he and his people were made prisoners. No sooner did Abram hear from a fugitive of the misfortune of his nephew than, prompted by his loving heart, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants, pursued the enemy, defeated him and recovered the booty. Thus he saved Lot and restored his property to him.

This little warlike incident is brightened by the introduction of Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of the most high God. He welcomed Abram most cordially, offered him and his followers bread and wine, praised him for his courage, and thanked God Almighty for having given him victory. Even the King of Sodom—the Sodomites were not known for their thankfulness or generosity—even he acknowledged the kindness rendered to him by Abram, saying, “Return to me the persons and keep the goods for thyself.” No sooner, however, had Abram heard this grateful offer, when from his unselfish heart he so manfully answered: “Here, I lift up my hand to the

Lord, and tell thee that I will not take anything that is thine, not even a thread from a shoe-latchet, lest thou should say, 'I have made Abram rich.' " Does this action show aught of the greed with which our people are so often accused?

X. GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAM

After Abram had freed his nephew, Lot, the voice of God came to him in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am thy shield; thy reward shall be very great." Then Abram said: "O Lord; my God, what couldst thou give me? Do I not walk childless?" "See," God replied, "look toward the sky and number the stars; as countless as they are, so shall thy descendants be in the future." And Abram believed in God and His promise, which belief made him still dearer in the eyes of God. The stars, pointed out by God to Abram, are like our people's mission on earth. Like stars first dimly shining, and then glittering and brightening up the sky and again being darkened by sweeping clouds, so Israel's fate in the world's history is in some measure foretold.

When Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, he took Hagar, an Egyptian woman, who had assisted Sarai as a servant, to be his wife. Hagar, feeling herself raised by her new position, treated her former mistress with disrespect and did not obey her. When, therefore, Sarai tried

to correct her, she fled from her. Then an angel of God found her at a well in the desert, and, addressing her, he said, "Hagar, thou servant of Sarai, whence comest thou, and where art thou going?" She answered, "I fled from my mistress, Sarai." Then the angel replied, "Return to thy mistress and humble thyself before her." He prophesied to her also that she would become in time the mother of a son, who was to be the father of a great nation—a son, indeed, whose hands, by the roughness of his nature, would be turned against every one and every one's hand against him.

Concerning angels of whom the Bible so often speaks, we have no other knowledge than that they are mentioned as messengers of good and bad news to man. Those good angels, however, which we still possess here on earth, are to be found in the persons of father and mother, of brother and sister, of teacher and instructor, and in every one who does good to his fellow-man in this world.

Hagar returned to her mistress, and after some time became the mother of a son, who was named Ishmael (God hears). Shortly after, as a fulfilment of his promise that Abram's descendants should become as numerous as the stars of heaven, God changed his name from Abram—the high father—to "Abraham"—father of a multitude. "Thou shalt become the father of a multitude of nations." At the same time the name of Sarai—my princess—was changed to "Sarah"—the princess.

XI. SODOM AND GOMORRAH

It was on a very warm day, while Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent, when he saw three men coming along the road. He was a most hospitable man, for hospitality was one of the principal virtues of the patriarchs and the ancient Hebrews; so he ran to meet them, and invited them to take a morsel of bread with him, for such was the common expression with which people were invited to take a meal. The men accepted the invitation; they entered the tent with him, and Abraham told his wife to prepare a meal for his guests. When one of the men asked him, "Where is thy wife, Sarah?" he answered, "See, she is, as every good wife should be, in her home, the tent"—*הנה באהל*—"Tell her," then said the man, "that within a year she will have a son." When Sarah heard this, she laughed, thinking that such a promise would never be fulfilled. Then the men left, and Abraham became aware that he had entertained angels. Thus cheerful hospitality often brings us unknowingly in contact with angels.

Two of the men took their way to Sodom, and Abraham accompanied them part of the way. When returning from his walk, the Lord said to him: "Behold, the sinfulness of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah is very great; therefore I have decided to destroy them." Then Abraham, unlike other people, who do not seem to

care about the welfare of their fellow-men, prayed to God that He should pardon or forgive the Sodomites. "The Judge of all the world," he prayed, "should He not act fairly or righteously? Could He punish in His justice, the good together with the bad? Perhaps," he continued "one could find fifty or forty, or even twenty or ten worthy persons in that city; would it not be right and proper to spare the city for the sake of the ten good ones?" And God promised not to destroy them all for the sake of ten good ones, but unfortunately they could not be found there.

The two angels arrived in Sodom toward evening. When Lot saw them, he begged them to stay with him over-night, which they willingly did. Scarcely had they gone to sleep, when the inhabitants of the city surrounded Lot's house and urged that he should give up the strangers to them. Lot, however, refused to do this, saying that his right to take care of the strangers was a sacred duty to him. But the people would not listen to him, for the Sodomites were known to be unkind and cruel to strangers. When, therefore, the ill-natured crowd tried to break down the door of Lot's house by force, they were at once struck with blindness by the angels, and thus they were forced to give up their evil purpose.

The angels now told Lot that they had come to warn him of the coming destruction of the place, and ordered him to leave the city at once with his whole family. Lot told this news to all the

members of his family; but the young men who were to marry his daughters did not believe him. When the morning came, and Lot himself was still hesitating, the angels took him, his wife and two daughters, and conducted them outside of the city, warning them once more not to linger and by no means to look back at the doomed place.

When the sun rose, Lot was already in Zoar, beyond the boundary of the city. But on Sodom and Gomorrah the Lord caused brimstone and fire to pour down, and, as foretold, the two cities, with all their inhabitants, were totally destroyed. Lot's wife, however, having no belief in God and not trusting the good which lay before her, could not refrain from looking back at the burning place, and was turned, as we are told, on account of her disobedience, into a pillar of salt. There is much good in the past; but in idealizing the past and constantly looking back at it, we often lose interest in the duty we owe to the present and the future.

After this God remembered Sarah and graciously favored her with a son. Abraham was at this time one hundred years old. The son thus born was called Isaac.

XII. ISHMAEL

Ishmael could only with difficulty be made to follow peaceful ways. He was not friendly toward his younger brother and frequently tried to vex and anger him. When Sarah, in her moth-

erly anxiety, observed these constant annoyances, she implored her husband to send Hagar away together with her son, Ishmael. Abraham at first objected to this, but as God told him to comply with his wife's wishes, he made up his mind to do so. He rose early in the morning, took bread and a bottle of water, gave them to Hagar, and sent her and her son away. She went with her child into the desert of Beer-Sheba. When the water in the bottle was gone, she put the child in the shade of a bush, went off a little way and sat down and wept, saying that she could not see her boy die.

This remark of hers, that "she could not see her boy die," does not sound motherly; for if a child is near death, it is the mother's duty to be at its side. However, God is nearest to us when we need Him. One of His angels took pity on both mother and child and addressed them, saying: "What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy; rise, take hold of thy child; do not part from him, for I will make him a great nation!" Then her eyes were opened, and she saw before her a sparkling well. She went to it, filled the bottle with water, and gave drink to her thirsty child. God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an archer. He afterward married, and it is said that the Ishmaelitish Arabs are his descendants.

XIII. ABRAHAM'S HARDEST TRIAL

The tale we are now about to relate is the call of God to Abraham bidding him to offer to Him his dearly beloved son, Isaac. This tale, which shows the patriarch's devotion to God, and which, moreover, points him out as a model of perfect trust and faith in our Heavenly Father, has found its proper place in our Jewish history and in our daily prayers, as well as in our divine service on the New Year's Day festival.

But, in addition to this, our tale suggests to us still another meaning, from which a good lesson may be learned. It must not be lost sight of that the offering of Abraham's child follows immediately after the expulsion of Hagar and her son Ishmael. Now, Sarah was the main cause of Hagar's expulsion, for we know that Abraham consented to it most unwillingly and only after God had told him to do so.

No matter in what way or light we may look upon Hagar's expulsion, even admitting that both her and her son's influence was not for good, the manner in which she was treated and cast out of her home with her child, was hard and unsympathetic. To leave mother and child to the mercy of the world was itself an unkind act; but such an act becomes even more unkind if it is done by such persons as Abraham and his wife, who were looked upon as model people.

There is a just reward and punishment in this

world, and our good and bad actions are repaid here on earth, although we do not always see or know it. Sarah, who was so eager to be rid of Hagar and her son, had to endure shortly afterward the bitter pain of having her only son Isaac taken away from her. It is true, it was only a trial, as the sacrifice was not carried out. The situation, nevertheless, was a most bitter and grievous one to Abraham, and as regards Sarah, the danger which threatened her son Isaac was the cause, we are told, of her death.

Is not this chapter an illustration of the truth that, "by the same measure we treat others, we shall be treated ourselves," or in other words, "whatever we do to our neighbor will be done to us"?

Father and son walked together. וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו.

Although Abraham had already experienced how hard it was for a father to part from his child, yet it must have been still harder for him when he was ordered by God to offer up his beloved son Isaac as a sacrifice. With that wonderful word of obedience, "Hinneni," "Here I am, willing to obey Thy command," he started upon his journey to the place selected for the sacrifice, taking his son Isaac with him. Isaac knew nothing of the awful fate hanging over him; like a good son he went with his father, and for doing so there was no other reason than that "father and son always walked together." The journey lasted three long days, and many serious thoughts and earnest reflections must have passed through

Abraham's mind, but he did not reveal his divine message to his trustful son, who, filled with deep love, kept himself closely and affectionately at his side, for "father and son walked together."

On the third day, when the appointed place was in sight, and Abraham was near the spot where he was to undergo his trial, Isaac suddenly addressed his parent, saying: "Father, here is the wood and there is the fire, but where is the lamb for a sacrifice?"

"The Lord will make known his sacrifice," Abraham replied, and this answer fully satisfied the inquiring son, for "father and son walked together."

Arriving at last at the place God had appointed, Abraham carefully arranged everything for the sacrifice. But at the very moment that he was to lay hands on his son, an angel of God called to him from Heaven, saying:

"Abraham! Abraham! Do not put thy hand on thy child, and do him no injury; I wanted only to try thee, and to know whether thou wert God-fearing and ready to carry out my command. I know, now, what a good and trustworthy servant thou art to me. Because thou hast obeyed my voice, I shall make thy descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the sea-shore."



XIV. THE DEATH OF SARAH—THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH

It was a heavy blow to Abraham when he lost his wife Sarah. She died at Hebron, at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven years.

Near Hebron was the cave of Machpelah, which belonged to a man named Ephron; this cave Abraham selected for a burial-place. He went to the gates of the city, where all the leading men of the place were gathered. In his impressive and modest way he said to them: "A stranger and sojourner I am among you; I came here to ask you to favor me with a burial-place of my own."

After having listened to him attentively, they replied to him in those noble words: "You are indeed a prince of God among us, נָשִׂיא אֱלֹהִים, honored and beloved by all; take, therefore, whatever ground you choose wherein to bury your dead."

Mark the worthy name, "Prince of God," with which Abraham was honored by mere strangers. If all brothers and sisters, nay, if all children would make themselves loved and esteemed in the eyes of their own family, their fellow-citizens, and the strangers whom they meet, no doubt all enmity would cease and the reign of love and good-will would soon spread over all the earth.

When this generous offer was made, Abraham bowed and gratefully replied, "Though I am thankful to you for your kindness, yet I do not

want to have this burial-ground for nothing. I prefer to pay for it." Then Ephron, the owner of the land, who was sitting among the assembled men, rose and said, "The land thou desirest is worth four hundred shekels of silver, a trifling sum between me and thee." Abraham forthwith purchased it for the sum named, and then buried his wife in the cave of Machpelah, which he had thus secured for himself and family.

XV. ELIEZER'S JOURNEY

Life is made up of contrasts. Joy and sorrow, hope and fear, mourning and gladness, follow rapidly after each other. Such a contrast we see now in the life of Abraham. Scarcely was Sarah dead and buried, when Abraham, being old and deprived of his heart's companion, tried to find a wife for his son Isaac. For this purpose he called before him his chief steward, Eliezer, a native of Damascus, who was a true and faithful servant to him. He told him to go to his relatives in Haran, Mesopotamia, and bring from there a wife for his son. The old steward gladly agreed to do so. But before departing on his journey he asked his master what he should do, if the woman he chose would not come with him. "Shall I then," he asked, "take thy son to the land from which thou hast come?" "Beware of doing so," Abraham answered. "The God of heaven and earth, who has taken me from my father's house, from my kindred and the land of

my birth, will send his angel before thee that thou mayst find a wife for my son. If, however, no maid will follow thee, then thou art free and released from thy promise."

The steward took ten camels and many precious gifts and went to the city of Nahor in Mesopotamia. After a tiresome journey of several days, he arrived toward evening at Nahor. He made a halt near a well of the place, prayed fervently to God for success in the errand on which he was sent, and, having strengthened himself by prayer, he said: "When one of the maidens of the city approaches this well to draw water, I shall request her to give me a drink. If she does so kindly, and also offers to give my camels some water, then this will be the woman whom God has chosen for my master's son, Isaac." Thus we see that he risked his choice on a chance, which is not the right way.

Scarcely had he spoken, when a maiden made her appearance. She was Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, and the grandchild of Nahor, Abraham's brother. She was carrying, after the custom of the time, her pitcher on her shoulder. A great artist has painted a beautiful picture called "Rebecca at the Well," which gives an excellent idea of how women were brought up in those days for the household duties of life.

When Rebecca had filled her pitcher, she was stopped by Eliezer, who said to her: "Pray, let me drink from thy pitcher!" She replied at once, "Drink, my lord; I will also give thy camels some water." Eliezer rejoiced at this offer, and forth-

with gave her rich presents, asking her in the mean time: "Whose daughter art thou? Is there room for us to stay over-night in thy father's house?" She answered him: "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milka and Nahor. Straw and food we have indeed in abundance; there is also enough room in our house for a night's rest and home comfort." Then Eliezer thanked God for having so soon found the relatives of his master Abraham.

XVI. REBECCA AND ISAAC

Rebecca hastened home and told what had happened to her. When her brother Laban, who was a shrewd and worldly man, saw the presents which had been given to his sister, he ran to the well where Eliezer stood with his camels; he invited him to his home, and also provided food for the animals. The old servant was requested to take some of the refreshments which were set before him. However, though he was hungry and fatigued from the long journey, he refused to taste anything before he had delivered his message. "I will not eat, I will not drink," he said, "until I have laid my request before you." These were the words of the man who so truly and faithfully served his master. Duty first, and then pleasure and rest.

He spoke to his hosts of his master Abraham, told of his great position and wealth and of the special errand he had intrusted to him to ask for

the hand of Rebecca for his master's son, Isaac. "If you now will show some love for my master," he continued, "then consent to give me your daughter as a wife for his son; if not, let me tarry no longer."

When Eliezer had given his special message, Laban and Bethuel replied to him, saying: "This cometh from the Lord; we cannot say anything against it; take Rebecca and let her be the wife of thy master's son." Thus we learn that God's word was heeded in Bethuel's house. The following morning they called Rebecca and said unto her, "Wilt thou go with this man?" And she said, "I will go." Even in ancient times a maiden's consent was necessary to her marriage. After they had blessed Rebecca—and no child should go out into the world without the parents' blessing—Eliezer started with her and her old nurse, on the homeward journey.

It was again toward evening when Eliezer approached his old home. Isaac had gone to the fields to meditate. While in his solemn mood, he suddenly raised his eyes and saw a train of camels coming. And Rebecca, too, while still at a distance, lifted up her eyes and asked the steward, "Who is yonder man who is coming to meet us?" "That is my master, Isaac," he replied. She then, from modesty, took her veil and covered her face. The steward told Isaac all that had happened. Isaac took Rebecca to his old father, and then into the tent of his departed mother, Sarah. He loved her dearly and was comforted by her after his mother's death. So does the good and true wife

bring back to her husband's heart the love and affection which he had felt for a departed mother.

Abraham died at the age of one hundred and seventy-five years. In his later years he was blessed in everything, which means that he was a favorite of God and man. He also had the great happiness of seeing his children united, for we read that Isaac and Ishmael, though different in character and disposition, together buried their old father in the cave of Machpelah, beside the body of his beloved Sarah.

XVII. ISAAC

God appeared to Isaac and repeated to him the promises He had made to his father Abraham. He told him that He would bless him and his house, and that "through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed."

Isaac was living at that time near Gerar, in the land of the Philistines. He was very fond of farming and loved the woods and the fields, so he diligently tilled the soil and raised very large crops. Thus he became greater and richer every year, possessing large numbers of flocks and herds, and also many servants.

But being a stranger in the land, the Philistines became jealous of him, and envying his prosperity, they filled up the wells which the servants of Abraham had dug. Then Abimelech, the king of Gerar, said to him: "Move away from us, for thou hast become mightier than we are." And Isaac

departed at once and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar. There he reopened wells which had been filled in by the Philistines, and called them by the very names which were given to them by his father.

His servants also dug in the valley, and found there a well of flowing water. But the herdsmen of Gerar were in conflict with those of Isaac, claiming the well was theirs, so he called the well Esek (fight), because they fought over it. Then his servants dug another well, but they likewise quarrelled over this one, and he called it Sitnah (enmity). At last he moved and dug another well, for which there was no fighting, and he called it Rehoboth (room), and he said: "For now the Lord has made room for us and we shall be prosperous in the land."

From there he went up to Beer-Sheba (well of the oath). That night God appeared again to him, saying: "I am the God of Abraham, thy father; fear not, for I am with thee. I will bless and multiply thee." Then Isaac built an altar and called upon the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there, while his servants dug another well.

When Abimelech saw that Isaac was still prosperous, he came on a visit to him. Then Isaac, who always wanted to be at peace with every one, said to him: "Why do you come to me, for you hate me and have driven me away from you?" Upon which the king replied: "We saw that the Lord was with thee, therefore let us make a covenant with thee, that thou wilt do us

no harm, as we have done nothing unto thee but good, and have sent thee away in peace. We see that you are indeed, בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה, the blessed of the Lord." We should always part in friendship from our fellow-man, with the blessing of the Almighty upon our work.

XVIII. ESAU AND JACOB

Isaac and Rebecca had two sons, the elder being called Esau and the younger Jacob. Esau was a hunter and fond of roving through forest and field. Because of the venison he brought home, he became his father's favorite; while Jacob, being a quiet young man who stayed about the home, was more beloved by his mother.

The parents, in thus bringing up their sons, made a great mistake. Each of them showed a strong preference for one of their children, and naturally the two brothers did not agree and did not have that strong affection for each other which brothers and sisters should have. Children of the same family should always be treated alike; not the slightest difference should be made between a handsome child and a plain-looking one, between an intelligent and a dull one, between a gentle-minded one and one who is inclined to be wild. All should find the same deep love within the parental heart.

Once Jacob was preparing a dish of pottage (lentils), when Esau, returning tired and hungry from the hunt, asked Jacob to let him taste some

of that "red" substance which he was cooking. Then Jacob said: "I shall do so, but first sell me thy birthright."

Esau, careless of his rights, replied: "Take it, of what use to me is the claim of a first-born, for must I not die after all?" Thus he sold his birthright to his brother for a dish of lentils. "Then he ate, drank, rose up and went away." In these few words the whole character of Esau is truly pictured. The birthright was not of any material benefit; it gave chiefly the right to be the priestly head or representative of the family.

Neither of the brothers is free from blame in this matter. Jacob should not have acted so selfishly or mercenary in regard to the food he gave to his hungry brother, while Esau should have shown more reverence for the distinction placed upon him.

Esau later married two Canaanitish women, who gave much trouble and sorrow to his parents. Dutiful sons and daughters should always consult their parents, and never marry against their wish or advice.

XIX. ISAAC'S BLESSING

When Isaac had become old and lost his sight, he called his son Esau and said to him: "My son, I am old and do not know when I shall die. Take, therefore, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and fetch me some venison, so that I may bless thee before I die." These words were heard

by Rebecca. She quickly prepared two kids, called her son Jacob, and told him to offer his father this favorite dish of his, and receive in return the promised blessing.

Jacob was not willing to do this, but Rebecca was determined to carry out her purpose. She dressed Jacob in Esau's garments, put the skin of the kids upon his hands and also upon the smooth part of the neck, so that his smooth skin would be hairy like Esau's, and then sent him with the savory dish to his father. "My father," Jacob said, "I am Esau, thy first-born; I have done as thou hast told me. I pray thee, eat of my venison, that thou mayest bless me."

The old father was surprised that Esau should have returned so quickly, and said, "How is it that thou hast come back so soon?" Jacob answered, "It was our heavenly Father who favored my work!" "Come nearer," said the old man, "in order that I may feel thee." When he came nearer, Isaac felt him and said: "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are those of Esau." It appears that he was not fully convinced, but still he ate of the meat and then blessed Jacob.

Hardly had Jacob left his father when Esau returned with the venison. When his father told him what had occurred, he was very angry and exclaimed bitterly: "He has deceived me twice; first he took away my birthright, and now my father's blessing." And Esau hated his brother and determined to kill him after his father's death.

This evil intention was noted with the keen-

ness of a mother's eye, and Rebecca advised Jacob to flee to Haran to her brother Laban, and to stay there until Esau's anger had passed. But to Isaac the shrewd mother said: "I do not want Jacob to take one of the maidens of this land for a wife; I would die rather than this should happen."

Then Isaac commanded Jacob to go to Mesopotamia, to the relatives of his mother, for the purpose of taking a wife. He departed with his father's blessing and his mother's good wishes.

XX. JACOB'S DREAM

There is no love like that of a kind father, no affection stronger than that shown by a fond mother, and no ties sweeter and more lasting than those which bind together loving brothers and sisters. We can easily imagine that Jacob, on his journey, must have felt how hard it was to part from the familiar scenes and pleasant surroundings of his happy childhood, and that the parting was, in some way, caused by his own acts. When we are separated from those who are nearest and dearest to us, there are two things which will keep us upright and strong in our dreariness and loneliness. These things are work and prayer (*Arbeiten und Beten*).

On the first night when, tired out from his journey, Jacob rested his weary head upon a hard stone, a wonderful dream came to him. In this dream he saw a huge ladder, reaching from earth to heaven. At the top of the ladder stood

the Lord, and on it His angels were walking up and down.

Through this vision Jacob was shown that even angels had to be active and industrious, and that nothing can redeem man from his faults and weaknesses so much as steady and constant work. In fact, our labor every day should begin with God in the morning and cease with Him in the evening. It was also in this very dream that God appeared to Jacob, promising to make his descendants as numerous as the dust of the earth, and that "through him all the people of the earth would be blessed."

When Jacob awoke from his sleep he said: "Truly, the Lord is in this place and I did not know it! Oh, how grand is this place! This is none other but the house of God and this is the gate of heaven!" In the morning Jacob arose at once, took the very stone which had served him for a pillow, put it up as a monument, anointed it with oil and called the place Beth-El (House of God). Then he made a vow and said: "If God will be with me and will guard me on the way I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to wear, and will lead me back in peace to my father's house, then this stone, which I have set up as a monument, shall become a house of God. Moreover, the Eternal shall be my God, and I shall give unto Him a tenth of everything" עשר אעשרנו לך

From this act of Jacob, like that of Abraham at a previous time, we trace the beautiful custom of our people to give "Maaser," or the tenth part

of that which we have earned, to the poor and needy. How wonderful! A single day's wandering in a strange country, separated from all his dear ones, quickly turned Jacob from a seeker after the so-called birthright to one who asked humbly for food and raiment.

XXI. JACOB AND RACHEL

Jacob proceeded on his journey, and when not far from Haran came to a well around which three flocks and their shepherds were camping. They were waiting for help to roll away the heavy stone which was laid upon the mouth of the well. Jacob went to them and asked from which place they had come, and they answered that they were from Haran. Then Jacob asked, "Tell me, do you know Laben, the grandson of Nahor? Does he do well?" And they said: "Certainly we know him and he does well. There comes his daughter Rachel, now."

Jacob, in order to make himself useful, ran to the well and moved away the heavy stone. Then he went to Rachel and made himself known as her cousin. Rachel had an elder sister, Leah by name. One may easily imagine how pleased she was to see her cousin and how heartily she welcomed him. And Jacob, too, was well pleased with her. Probably he saw in her face some likeness to his mother Rebecca.

Rachel went home and told her father about the

visitor who had arrived. Laban went at once to invite him to his house; he gave him a most hearty welcome and afterward asked Jacob to assist him in his labors. Jacob willingly consented, and when after a while he had become very useful to him, Laban told him that he need not work for him for nothing and insisted that Jacob himself should fix his own wages. Then Jacob, who had taken a great liking to his cousin Rachel, asked his uncle to give him his daughter as a reward for seven years' toil. The uncle willingly agreed to this. How greatly Jacob's selfish nature must have changed when for love alone he agreed to win the hand of his future wife by so long a time of hard labor!

When the time had passed, Laban made a great wedding-feast and invited all the people of the place. As soon as the guests were assembled, Laban conducted his daughter, Leah, covered with a veil, into the room and gave her to Jacob as a wife. Then Jacob said to Laban: "What hast thou done unto me? Did I not serve thee for Rachel? Why hast thou deceived me?" And Laban answered: "It is not the custom here to marry the younger daughter before the older one. For seven years more of service, I shall give you Rachel."

Jacob had no other choice than to do what had been asked of him. By the very means through which we sin in life we are often punished ourselves. Jacob, who deceived his old father, was in return deceived by his uncle. However, the seven years of additional labor were quickly passed and

Jacob then took Rachel for his wife. After the Lord had blessed Leah with a number of sons and a daughter, Rachel was favored with a son who was called Joseph.

XXII. JACOB LEAVES LABAN

Jacob's strongest desire was to return to his old home. But when Laban saw that his flocks were always growing larger under Jacob's care, he persuaded Jacob to stay with him and to work for him for wages. They made an agreement that all the speckled and brown-colored sheep and goats should belong to Jacob. Jacob then served Laban six years longer. God blessed him and he became richer and richer. Like his father, Isaac, he owned large flocks and herds and many servants. Although Laban's herds also multiplied, yet he became jealous of Jacob's prosperity and often changed his wages.

Once Jacob heard Laban's sons say: "Jacob has taken away everything that belongs to our father; he has become rich with our father's property." At this time Jacob also noticed that Laban was by no means so friendly as he had once been.

When, therefore, Jacob could no longer live in peace with Laban, God said to him: "Return to the land of thy fathers and to thy birthplace; I shall be with thee." After this promise, Jacob told Rachel and Leah of his desire to return to the land of his birth. They both agreed to go

with him, and said, "Do that which God has told thee to do."

During the time that Laban had gone away to shear his sheep, Jacob took his family, his servants, his flocks and herds, and all that belonged to him, and went toward the land of Canaan, eager to see again his old father and mother. But Rebecca, his dear mother, to whom he was devotedly attached, had died during his long absence. He passed over the river Euphrates and then took his way toward the mountain of Gilead.

On the third day, after he had left, it was reported to Laban that Jacob had fled. Then Laban took his relatives, probably also his sons, and went in pursuit. After seven days he overtook Jacob on Mount Gilead. Then God appeared to Laban in the night, telling him not to do any wrong to Jacob and not to prevent him from continuing his journey.

On the following morning Laban said to Jacob: "It is not right that thou hast done such a thing. Why didst thou leave secretly? Why didst thou not tell me? I would have accompanied thee with joy, with songs and with music! Thou didst not even permit me to kiss my sons and daughters; indeed thou hast acted quite foolishly."

Then Jacob answered: "I feared that thou wouldst have taken thy daughters away from me. But why hast thou followed me? These twenty years that I have been with thee, I have faithfully served thee. I suffered from the heat in the day and from the frost by night, and sleep

departed from mine eyes. I did not trifle away my time, but did my duty faithfully. Fourteen years I have served for thy daughter and six years more for my cattle and for thine as well. Didst thou not change my wages ten times? If it had not been for the God of my fathers, thou wouldst have even sent me away from thee empty-handed."

Then Laban said: "Thy daughters are my daughters, thy sons are my sons, thy herds are my herds; but what can I do now unto my daughters and their children?" Then they made a covenant of peace together, and as a sign of their agreement they gathered stones and made a heap and called it Galeed, and also Mizpah, for, said Laban, "The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from the other." On the following morning Laban rose early, said farewell to his daughters and their children, blessed them and returned to his native place. And Jacob went on his way toward Canaan.

XXIII. THE STRUGGLE IN THE NIGHT

Jacob was now approaching the land of Seir, where Esau dwelt. Not knowing how Esau would receive him and in order to win his favor, Jacob sent messengers ahead with gifts. When they returned they told Jacob that Esau was coming with four hundred men to meet him. This frightened Jacob, for he believed that Esau intended to punish him and his family for his past

acts. Then he sent on his servants with more presents, removed his family and flocks across a river, and remained behind alone to await Esau's coming.

During the night, the Bible says, a man wrestled with Jacob until daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overcome Jacob he said, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." But Jacob answered, "I will not let thee go until thou hast blessed me." Then the man said, "What is thy name?" And Jacob told him. "Thy name shall no more be Jacob," said the man, "but Israel (champion of God), for as a champion thou hast wrestled with a messenger of God and with man, and hast prevailed." And then he blessed Jacob.

This struggle at night tells of Jacob's strong effort to rid himself of his former weaknesses and failings and to become a better man by making the divine spirit stronger within him. As Jacob, the imperfect one, he left his father's house, but as Israel, the more perfect and God-devoted man, he returned to his native place.

XXIV. THE HOMEWARD JOURNEY

When Jacob beheld Esau coming with four hundred men, he called his family about him, and then advanced to meet him, bowing down before him seven times. In doing so and in calling him several times "my master Esau," Jacob paid his elder brother due reverence and honor. Esau embraced him and kissed him and they both wept.

Seeing the mothers with their children, Esau asked, "Who are these whom you have with you?" "These are the children," Jacob answered, "with whom God has favored me." Then his wives and children came nearer and bowed down before Esau.

After this Esau said: "What was the meaning of those various bands I met on the road?" And Jacob answered, "Those were presents which I beg you to accept from me." But Esau answered, "I have enough, my brother, keep what is thine;" upon which Jacob replied, "Pray take them, I have plenty of all." Esau finally accepted the gift. He, who like Esau, has "much," implies that he still desires more; but he who, like Jacob, has "everything," expresses satisfaction with his portion.

Esau kindly offered to travel with Jacob or to leave some of his men as guards, but Jacob declined the offer. Then Esau returned to the land of Seir.

Jacob continued on his journey and came to Beth-El where God had first appeared to him. There he built the altar, as he had promised to do when he fled from his home.

When still at a distance from Ephrath, Rachel died. She was buried by the roadside and Jacob erected a monument upon her grave. She was so dearly beloved in her lifetime that she has been looked upon ever since as a "mother in Israel." Her youngest son was called Benjamin.

Thus it was that Jacob came with a sad and mournful heart to his father Isaac. He found him

still alive, and was heartily and joyfully welcomed by him, but the joy of being with him was very short. Isaac died very soon afterward, at the age of one hundred and eighty years. His sons, Jacob and Esau, buried him in the cave of Machpelah.

Jacob had twelve sons: Reuben, Simeon, Lhevi, Judah, Issacher, Zebulon, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Joseph, and Benjamin, and one daughter who was called Dinah.

XXV. JOSEPH

Jacob settled in Canaan (Hebron) where his father had dwelt. But his well-earned rest (וַיִּשָּׁב יַעֲקֹב) was broken by domestic troubles. These were caused partly by Jacob's own acts and partly by the unfeeling conduct of his sons. Jacob should have known from his own experience how unwise and harmful it is to make favorites of children or to prefer the one child to the other. To be just and impartial should be the foremost rule in households, in schools and in governments.

Joseph, at the age of seventeen, was handsome in appearance, agreeable in manners, and devoted to his old father. With his brothers he tended the flocks in the fields. While with them he heard them say many unpleasant things which, in his boyish thoughtlessness, he repeated to his father. For this reason he was looked upon by his brothers as a tale-bearer.

Jacob, or Israel as he was now called, loved Joseph more than all his sons, for he was the child

of his old age and the son of his beloved Rachel. He ordered for Joseph a coat of many colors, which made him vain and singled him out from all his brothers. It was not to be wondered at that the brothers began to dislike him. Children should always be dressed in the simplest and plainest manner.

Joseph was a youth with a strong imagination, and was haunted by dreams. Once he had a dream which he boastfully told his brothers, saying: "Hear this dream, which I have dreamed. It was as if we were binding sheaves in the field; then my sheaf rose up and remained upright, while your sheaves, surrounding mine, graciously bowed down before it." Then the brothers said: "Wilt thou be a king over us, or wilt thou rule over us?" And they hated him more on account of these dreams and conceited words.

When Joseph noticed what effect the telling of his dreams had upon his brothers, he should not have said anything further. But it was not long afterward when he told them of another dream, saying: "It was as if the sun, moon, and eleven stars were bowing down before me."

He also told this dream to his father, who (וינער בו אביו) rebuked him. Instead of doing so, Jacob should have told him that it is much wiser, at certain occasions in life, especially when we are surrounded by unfriendly faces, to keep our tongues in check and to practise the virtue of silence.

XXVI. JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT

Once when the brothers were tending the flocks in the neighborhood of Shechem, Jacob told Joseph to go and inquire after their welfare. Joseph, though knowing the ill-feeling his brothers bore against him, immediately obeyed the command of his father.

When they saw him coming at a distance they were stirred to anger. "Look, there comes the dreamer," they said to one another. "Let us kill him and throw him into a pit. We shall then see what will become of his dreams. We might say to our father that a wild animal has torn him to pieces." Reuben, however, objected, saying: "We must not kill him. Do not shed innocent blood. Put him into the pit, but do not injure him." It was Reuben's intention to save Joseph from his brothers and afterward bring him back to his father.

No sooner did Joseph come up to them than they took hold of him, stripped off his garment of many colors, and threw him into the pit; fortunately the pit was empty and without water. After their heartless work was done, the brothers sat down to partake of their meal. That they could eat after they had committed such an unbrotherly act shows how harsh and unkind they must have been.

While they were at their meal, they noticed that a caravan of Ishmaelitish merchants, taking balm, myrrh and spices to Egypt, was approaching

them. Then Judah said to his brothers: "Why should we kill our brother and stain our hands with his blood? Let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, for he shall not die by our hands as he is our brother." This was agreed to, and they sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels.

Then the brothers took Joseph's coat, dipped it into the blood of a goat, and brought it to their father. When Jacob saw it he exclaimed: "It is my son's coat; a wild beast has killed him!" And he mourned many days for Joseph and would not be comforted.

XXVII. JOSEPH AS A SLAVE

When the caravan reached Egypt, Joseph was sold as a slave to Potiphar, a captain of King Pharaoh's bodyguard. He was a faithful servant, and whatever his master intrusted to him, was promptly and carefully done. He soon won the favor of his master, and as he was honorable in his conduct and attentive to his duties, he succeeded in everything that he undertook, and became known as (אִישׁ מַעֲלִיץ) a prosperous man. After a while Potiphar's wife became dissatisfied with Joseph; she accused him of an act he had never committed and had him put in prison.

But even in jail God was with Joseph. He found grace in the eyes of the overseer of the prison and helped him in his work. At this very time the chief butler and the chief baker of Pharaoh were in prison on account of a wrong they

had done. Joseph often saw these men. One morning, noticing that they were rather sad and downcast, he asked them, "Why are you so sad?" They answered him: "Each of us had a dream this night, and there is none here able to interpret them." Joseph replied: "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams; perhaps I can explain them to you."

Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him: "In my dream, behold a vine was before me, and on the vine were three branches; and it was as though it budded and blossoms shot forth and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes; and Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into the cup and gave it to Pharaoh." And Joseph said: "This is the interpretation: The three branches are three days. After three days, Pharaoh will restore thee to thy place and thou wilt serve him in the manner thou hast done before. But if it be well with thee, show me also a little kindness and remember me unto Pharaoh, that I may come out of this place. I have been stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing, but have been imprisoned without cause."

The baker then told his dream, saying: "I dreamed that I had three baskets on my head. In the uppermost basket there was all manner of bake-meats for Pharaoh, and the birds did eat them out of the baskets upon my head." And Joseph answered: "This is the interpretation thereof: The three baskets are three days. Within

three days shall Pharaoh lift thy head from off thee and shall hang thee on a tree, and the birds shall eat thy flesh."

And it came to pass as Joseph had interpreted. After three days; Pharaoh celebrated his birthday by giving a great feast to his servants. On this occasion he remembered the two prisoners and restored the butler to his former office and hanged the chief baker as Joseph had foretold. The chief butler, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him. So it happens daily in life; the wrong which is done to us is strongly impressed upon our memory, while the good that is rendered to us is unfortunately too soon forgotten.

XXVIII. FROM PRISON TO PALACE

Although man may forget those who benefit him, yet God does not forget those who love Him. We see this in Joseph's wonderful career. After Joseph had been in prison for two years, Pharaoh had a dream, in which it seemed as if he were standing by the Nile, where he saw seven fat cows, followed by seven lean cows, come out of the water and go into a meadow. Suddenly the lean cows ate the fat and healthy ones. Then Pharaoh awoke, but slept again and dreamed that he saw seven good ears of corn grow on one stalk; but after them came seven thin and withered ears. Then the seven thin ears swallowed the seven good ones.

In the morning the king was troubled, and

he sent at once for his wise men to explain his dreams. But they could not interpret them. At last the chief butler remembered Joseph and told the king that when he and the chief baker had been in prison, a Hebrew youth of much intelligence correctly interpreted both of their dreams. Pharaoh at once sent for Joseph, who, after he had been clothed in new garments, was conducted into the presence of the mighty ruler.

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: "I have heard it said that thou knowest how to interpret dreams." "It is not I," Joseph replied, "but God who will tell Pharaoh the answer." Pharaoh told his dreams to Joseph, and when he had finished Joseph said: "Both dreams are really one, and through them God reveals to the king that which is to happen. The seven fat cows and the seven good ears of corn mean seven years; and the seven thin cows and the seven thin ears of corn also mean seven years. There will be seven years of plenty and over-abundance in Egypt; and then seven bad years will follow, during which the people will be in want of bread, as there will be a great famine throughout the whole land. The doubling of the dream means that God will carry out His intention at once."

Joseph then called the attention of Pharaoh to the necessity of placing an able man over the land, who during the years of plenty should gather or collect a certain portion of all the grain and keep it in special storehouses until the time of famine.

Then Pharaoh said: "Where can we find a man

wiser and more intelligent than thou art? I appoint thee over my house and my land, and only in regard to the throne will I be greater than thou." He took off his ring and put it on Joseph's finger; he dressed him in rich garments and put a gold chain about his neck. He made him ride in his second chariot, and the people bowed down before him. Thus Pharaoh made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. Joseph was at that time thirty years old. Later on he married Asnath the daughter of Potiphara, a priest.

During the seven years of plenty Joseph travelled throughout all Egypt, collecting as much grain as he could and placing it in the royal storehouses. No sooner had these years passed when the time of scarcity began. The starving Egyptians had to give up their money and flocks, their fields and even their own persons in exchange for corn. But through Joseph's careful handling of the collected provisions, the people were supplied with food and the king was greatly benefited.

Two sons were born to Joseph; one was called Manasseh and the other Ephraim. A deep meaning is attached to these names. By the name Manasseh, Joseph intended to express that God had made him forget (נִשְׁכַּח אֱלֹהִים) all the trouble and sorrows of his father's house; in other words, that he had no bitterness in his heart for the ill-treatment he had received from his brothers. And by the name of the second son, Ephraim, he expressed the idea that God had let him prosper (הִפְרִי אֱלֹהִים) in the land of his affliction, (בְּאֶרֶץ עֲנִי). But was

it right to call it Egypt, the country in which he had been raised to high honors, the land of his affliction? He admitted that he had been successful in Egypt, but the land of his birth he loved much more.

XXIX. JOSEPH MEETS HIS BROTHERS

The great famine had also extended to the land of Canaan. When Jacob heard that corn was to be had in Egypt, he said to his sons: "Why do you stare at one another so idly? I hear that there is corn in Egypt; go and bring us some from there, so that we may keep ourselves alive." Then the brothers went down to Egypt to buy corn, but Benjamin did not go with them, as his father feared that an accident might happen to him.

When they arrived in Egypt, they had to go to Joseph to buy corn. They appeared before him, and bowed down with their faces to the earth. When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them at once, but they did not know him. He did not make himself known, and spoke very roughly to them. "Whence come ye?" he asked, and they answered: "From the land of Canaan to buy food."

"I do not believe you," said Joseph; "you are spies and have come to see the weakness of the land." He thus paid them back in their own coin, for they had once charged him with being the father's spy. But the brothers replied: "Oh, no, my lord; thy servants have come to buy food."

We are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan, and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and another one is not any more among us."

Then Joseph said: "Thus shall you be proved; you shall not go forth, except your youngest brother come hither. One of you shall bring him here and the rest shall be kept in prison, in order that your words may be proven whether there be any truth in you, or else you are surely spies." And he put them all in prison for three days.

On the third day they were brought before him again and he said to them: "Do this and live, for I fear God, and do not want that your people at home should suffer hunger. One of you shall be kept in prison, and if you are honest men, as you say, you may go home and take the corn you bought to your family. But on your return you must bring your youngest brother with you."

Then conscience, the still, small voice of God in the human heart, which had been asleep in them during all these years, awakened again, and they said to one another: "Thus are we punished for our treatment of Joseph. We saw the anguish of his soul when he implored us to spare him, but we had no pity on him; therefore this misfortune has fallen on us."

They did not know that Joseph understood all, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. He turned away from them and wept, but when he returned he took Simeon from their midst and had him put in chains before their eyes. Then he ordered that their sacks be filled with corn, that

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their money be put into their sacks and that provisions be given them for the return journey.

When on the road they stopped to give food to their asses, one of the brothers on opening his sack found his money, which made them all afraid. On reaching home, how great was their surprise when each of them found his money in his sack. Then they became more frightened and uneasy. They told their father all that had happened, that they were accused of being spies by the ruler of the country, that Simeon was imprisoned, and the ruler demanded that they bring their youngest brother, Benjamin, to him.

On hearing this Jacob said: "You deprive me of all my children; Joseph is not any more, and Simeon is not, and now you will also take Benjamin away." Then Reuben said: "Slay two of my sons if I do not bring Benjamin back to thee." What a thoughtless proposal! Did Reuben really think that his old father would enter into such a cruel bargain with him?

Jacob did not readily consent to the request of his sons. "My son Benjamin," he said, "shall not go with you, he alone is left to me. If misfortune should befall him on the way, then will you bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

XXX. THE SECOND JOURNEY TO EGYPT

The famine was very severe in Canaan. When the corn was gone, Jacob was compelled to again send his sons to Egypt. "Go down," he

said to them, "and buy provisions for us." Judah replied: "We cannot go without taking our brother Benjamin with us. Entrust the boy to me; I will be surety for him; if I bring him not back unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame forever."

Then Jacob said: "If it must be, then let it be done. Carry down with you some presents for the man. Take also, besides the money which was found in your sacks, other money with you; it might have been an oversight that he did not accept the payment. And God, the Almighty, give you mercy before the man that he send away your other brother and Benjamin."

So they journeyed again to Egypt, taking Benjamin with them. When they arrived, they went at once to Joseph's house and told his steward about the money that was found in the sacks. But the steward answered: "Peace be to you; fear not, your God and the God of your father has given you a treasure (חֵמָה) in your sack." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

Soon after Joseph made his appearance; the brothers bowed down before him and handed him the presents. He greeted them kindly and said: "Is your father well? Is he yet alive?" They answered him: "Our father is in good health; he is yet alive."

When Joseph saw Benjamin, his mother's son, he asked: "Is this your youngest brother of whom you spoke unto me?" Being answered that he was the youngest one, he said: "God be gracious unto thee, my lad." He could not speak further,

for his heart was touched, so he went into another room and wept. After he had wept awhile, he bathed his eyes and returned.

So it is in life. Who knows what feelings move the human heart? In one moment it aches and brings tears to the eyes, while in the next the tears are washed away, and the countenance does not show what has happened.

Joseph now invited the brothers to dine with him. They were not a little astonished when they saw that their places at the table were arranged according to their ages. Benjamin was particularly honored by Joseph.

After they had taken their meal, Joseph commanded his chief steward to fill their sacks with corn, and to give them as much as they could carry. He also told him to again place the money of each of the brothers in the opening of each sack; but in Benjamin's sack he ordered to be put, in addition to the money, his own silver cup.

XXXI. JOSEPH MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN

Scarcely had the brothers left the city when they were overtaken by Joseph's chief steward who indignantly asked them: "Why did you repay good with evil? You have indeed acted very wrongly, for you have taken my master's silver cup." Then the brothers answered: "Why do you speak such words to us? If you can find the cup in the possession of any one of us, let him die at once, and we shall all be slaves to thy master."

Quickly they opened their sacks, and the steward searched them all. With the eldest he commenced and with the youngest he ceased, in order that they should not notice that he knew where the cup was,—and lo, it was found in Benjamin's sack. Filled with dismay, they rent their clothes, returned to the city and fell down before Joseph.

It was Judah who lifted up his voice and said: "What shall we say? How shall we justify ourselves! God has found out our wrong-doing; behold, we are thy servants, both we and he also, with whom the cup was found." Then Joseph said: "The man with whom the cup was found shall be my servant; but as for you, go you in peace to your father."

Then Judah appealed to Joseph, saying: "If we were to return to our father and the lad is not with us, he surely would die,—וְנַפְשׁוֹ קְשׁוּרָה בְּנַפְשׁוֹ— for our father's life is bound up in the lad's life. Therefore let me be thy servant instead of Benjamin, and let him go home with his brothers."

When Joseph heard Judah's noble plea, in which he mentioned his father many times, he could no longer restrain himself. In order not to make his brothers ashamed in the presence of strangers, he ordered all the Egyptians to leave, and then, weeping, said: "I am Joseph (הַעוֹרֵר אֲבִי הִי). Does my father still live?" But they could not answer, for they were dumbfounded.

Then Joseph said once more: "Come nearer to me; I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But do not be grieved or angry with yourselves; it was not you, but God, who sent me be-

fore you to preserve life (פִּי לְמַחְיָה שְׁלַחְנִי אֱלֹהִים לְפָנֶיכֶם) (Providence of God). Hasten, go to my father, and say unto him that God has made me lord of all Egypt; and that he shall come unto me and stay with me, and also every member of his family. For we shall have five more years of famine, but I shall maintain him and his household" (וּבְלִפְלִיתִי אֶתְךָ שָׂם). Children, whose aged parents are unable to provide for themselves, should constantly keep these words in mind.

Then Joseph embraced Benjamin and kissed him and all his other brothers for joy. King Pharaoh also sent to Jacob a special invitation to come to Egypt. Laden with presents, the brothers started on their homeward journey. In bidding them farewell, Joseph forcibly impressed upon them those beautiful words of peace (אֵל תִּרְצֻן בְּדֶרֶךְ), "Do not fall out by the way."

XXXII. JACOB MEETS JOSEPH

Jacob waited anxiously for the return of his sons, and he rejoiced when he saw them again and that Benjamin was with them. He could hardly believe the good news that Joseph was still living, but when he saw the wagons which had been sent to bring him to Egypt, he exclaimed: "I will go and see him before I die."

Then Jacob, his sons and their wives and children, started for Egypt with all their goods and cattle. Jacob's people, including Joseph and his sons, at that time numbered seventy persons in

all. Joseph went to meet his father, and when he saw him he embraced him and wept a long time.

Pharaoh was also kind and gracious and told Joseph to select the best of the land for his father and brothers to settle upon. They chose Goshen, and dwelt there, taking care of the king's cattle.

It may be asked here why Joseph did not let his father know sooner that he still lived and occupied a high position. Joseph had a strong belief in the guidance of God, and he was certain that God would find a fitting time to bring him and his brothers together again.

XXXIII. DEATH OF JACOB AND JOSEPH

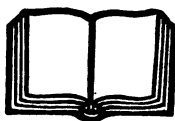
Jacob lived seventeen years in Egypt. When he felt his life drawing to an end, he requested Joseph not to bury him in Egypt, but in the cave of Machpelah, where Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Leah were buried. Joseph promised that he would do so. Would that all children carry out a dying father's wishes so strictly as did Joseph!

Joseph brought his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim before Jacob, who blessed them, saying: "Manasseh shall be great, but Ephraim shall be greater and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." To Joseph he said: "God shall be with you and bring you again into the land of your fathers."

Before he died, Jacob called all his sons about him. To each one he spoke fatherly words of ad-

vice, and cautioned them against the weaknesses his paternal eyes had seen in them. Then he blessed them and closed his eyes in peaceful death. His body was embalmed and taken to Canaan by Joseph and his brothers. Many of the servants of Pharaoh and the elders of Egypt went with them.

Joseph and his brothers lived happily in Egypt for many years after their father's death. When Joseph was one hundred and ten years old, he knew his time had come, but before he died he made his brothers promise that when God brought them out of Egypt they would carry his bones with them. After his death his body was embalmed and put in one of the Egyptian sepulchres.



XXXIV. ISRAEL IN EGYPT

Long after the death of Joseph, a king ruled over Egypt who did not know Joseph. As Egypt is the "Land of Monuments," it seems very strange that Joseph's great name was not preserved either in stone or document, and that he was so easily forgotten. Such is, however, national ingratitude. This new king said to his people: "Behold, the children of Israel are becoming too numerous and too mighty for us. Let us beware lest in case of war they take up arms against us, join our enemies and leave our land. We must set taskmasters over them, who shall afflict them with heavy burdens."

Then heavy tasks were put upon the Israelites, and they were compelled to build for Pharaoh the cities of Pithom and Raamses. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread. It is no wonder that their lives were greatly embittered by the hard labor they were compelled to perform. All praise is due to the mothers who, during the toiling hours of their husbands, brought up and educated the children.

Pharaoh, seeing that he could not prevent the increase of the Israelites by hard work, imposed upon them by rough taskmasters, resorted to another and most cruel measure. He commanded that every new-born son should be cast into the river, while every daughter should be kept alive.

Then it happened that a man from the house of

Levi took a wife from the same family. The name of the man was Amram and that of his wife Jochebed. She bore a son, a very goodly and handsome child, בֵּי טוֹב, whom she managed to conceal from the spying eyes of the officers for three long months. When she could no longer hide the infant, she made a basket of bulrushes, daubed it with clay and pitch, put the child therein and laid it among the reeds by the river's brink. But the sister of the child, a bright little girl of about five years, placed herself at a distance to see what would happen to the babe. Who can imagine the feelings of the sister's heart as she watched the fate of her little baby brother? But as it often happens in critical moments, so it happened here; when help is most needed God is nearest by our side.

XXXV. MOSES

It came to pass that Pharaoh's daughter, whose name we are told was Thermuthis, while about to bathe in the river, saw the little basket among the rushes. She sent her maid to fetch it, and when it was opened, she saw the weeping child. She naturally had pity for the babe, and said: "This is one of the Hebrew's children."

Then the little sister, Miriam, who had been closely watching the scene, ran quickly to the princess, and asked her: "Shall I go and call a Hebrew woman, that she may nurse the child for thee?" "Go quickly," was the answer. Whereupon

little Miriam fetched her mother, who, as we may easily imagine, was overjoyed to again possess her child. Then the princess said to the mother: "Take away this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." **אני אֶתֶן אֶת שְׂכָרִי** The princess offered to pay Jochebed, not knowing that she was the real mother.

When other people bring up our children, we must not think that in paying for their education we do everything that is required of us; for this is not all. We must, in addition, have a certain feeling of respect and honor for those persons who teach and direct them.

The mother took the boy and reared him, and when he had grown up, she brought him to the king's daughter, who, it seems, adopted him as her son. She called him Moses (Moshe), "for," she said, "out of the waters have I drawn him." Moses' sister was called Miriam, and an elder brother was named Aaron.

XXXVI. MOSES FLEES TO MIDIAN

After Moses had grown up he often mingled with his brethren as they toiled at their heavy burdens, and his heart was touched by their afflictions. On one occasion he saw an Egyptian officer cruelly beating a Hebrew. Aroused at the sight, he flew into a great passion and, seeing no one about, killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand.

On the following day he saw two Hebrew men quarrelling and one was striking the other. Then Moses said to the one who was in the wrong: "Wherefore strikest thou thy brother?" And the man impudently replied: "Who has made thee a ruler and judge over us? Dost thou intend to kill me as thou didst the Egyptian?" Then Moses was very much afraid, and said: אָנֹכִי נֹדֵעַ הָרָבִי — "Now I see the matter is known."

Some of our commentators say that Moses meant by these words that, "I see now what is the matter with the Israelites; they partly deserve their fate, for if two of them cannot agree with each other, how will it be with such a large number?"

When Pharaoh was informed of Moses' deed, he resolved to have him punished. But Moses quickly fled from Egypt and went to the land of Midian, where Jethro was priest. Jethro is known in the Bible under seven different names: Reuel, Jether, Jethro, Chobab, Cheber, Keni and Putiel.

While Moses was resting near a well, Jethro's seven daughters, who tended their father's sheep, came and filled the troughs to water their flocks. Then some shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them. Here again we find that Moses could not see a wrong done, for he defended the unprotected maidens from the rough shepherds. He drove away the men, assisted the maidens, and helped them water their flocks.

It may be asked why the shepherds did not

have more respect for the daughters of a man who was the priest of the land. Our sages say that Jethro, at that time, was an ex-priest. Is it not usually the case that we honor a man's position much more than we do his character?

When the daughters returned to their father, he asked why they had come home so early that day. And they answered him: "An Egyptian man helped us against the shepherds; he drew water for us, and made himself very useful." Then he said to his daughters: "Why did you not call him, that he may eat bread with us?" They did so and Jethro asked Moses to remain with him. He consented to do so, entered into his service, and married Zipporah, one of his daughters.

Moses remained many years in Midian. Two sons were born to him. The first-born he called Gershom, "for," said he, "I have been a stranger in a strange land." The second son he named Eliezer, which means "God is my help," "for the God of my fathers was my help and saved me from the sword of Pharaoh."

During this time the king of Egypt, from whom he had fled, had died and a new king had taken his place. But the children of Israel sighed by reason of their bondage, and they cried, and their cry went up to God and He remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

XXXVII. THE BURNING BUSH

Once, as he tended the sheep of his father-in-law, Moses led his flock into the desert and came to the mountain of Horeb, which was also called Sinai. Then an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire from the midst of a thorn-bush. Moses looked, and behold, the bush was burning and was not consumed. Then Moses, having a keen and observant eye, said: "I will go and see this strange sight, why the bush is not consumed." This inquiring "why" has often been the very key to many researches, inventions, and discoveries.

When he came nearer to the bush, God called unto him out of the midst thereof and said: "Moses, Moses!" And he answered: "Here am I." And God said: "Draw not nigh; take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground," and (speaking, as our sages remark, in the familiar voice of Moses' father Amram), God continued to say: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob!"

Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. But God said: "I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their lamentations; I know their sorrows. And I have come down to deliver them out of the land of Egypt, and will bring them to a good and large land, to one flowing with milk and honey. And I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou

mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

And Moses said to God: "Who am I, being but a mere shepherd and knowing my own personal littleness, that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Such was the answer which came from the lips of the modest shepherd. But God encouraged him and said: "I will be with thee and this shall be a token unto thee that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, they shall serve me on this mountain."

Then Moses said unto God: "Behold, when I come to the children of Israel and shall say unto them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me unto you,' and they shall say unto me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say unto them?" And God said unto Moses: "*I am that I am* (Ehjeh asher Ehjeh). Tell the children of Israel, I, the Eternal, the God of your fathers, who is, was, and ever will be, has sent me unto you. He appeared to me and said, 'I have remembered you and will lead you away from the bondage of Egypt, into a land that is flowing with milk and honey.'

"And then, thou and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and shall tell him, 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has appeared to us, and now we beseech thee, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to him.' I know that he will not let thee go; but I shall then stretch out my hand and smite Egypt with all my mighty wonders. After that he will let thee go."

XXXVIII. MOSES RECEIVES GOD'S CHARGE

Moses still objected to going and said: "Behold, they will not believe me, nor will they hearken unto my voice, as they will probably say, 'The Lord has not appeared to thee.'" Then God said: "What hast thou in thy hand?" And Moses answered, "A rod." "Then cast it on the ground." He did so, and it became a serpent, from which Moses fled. And God said: "Put forth thy hand and take it by the tail," and having done so, it became a rod again in his hand. "By this token they will certainly believe thee." Then God said: "Put thy hand now into thy bosom," and when he took it out again it was leprous, white as snow. And God said: "Put thy hand again into thy bosom," and when he took it out again it was like other flesh. And God continued and said: "If they will not believe these two signs, then take of the water of the river, pour it upon the dry land, and then the waters will be turned into blood."

Despite all the divine directions he received, Moses still hesitated to accept the grand mission, and replied: "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, nor am I a man of words, for thy servant is slow of speech and tongue." And the Lord said unto him: "Who has made man's mouth? Who maketh him dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Eternal? Now, therefore, go and I will teach thee what thou shalt say."

Again Moses showed a strong dislike to be entrusted with such a heavy task and responsibility, and he said: "Send, I pray thee, another messenger." Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against Moses and He said: "Is not Aaron, the Levite, thy brother? I know that he can speak well; behold, he cometh forth to meet thee, and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. And thou shalt speak unto him and put words into his mouth, and I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what you shall do. He shall be thy spokesman unto the people. This rod take in thy hand wherewith thou shalt do signs."

After this Moses felt more at ease and was contented. He returned to Jethro, and said unto him: "Let me go, I pray thee, to return to my brethren who are in Egypt." And Jethro said to Moses: "Go in peace."

Faith in a good work is like a staff, which supports us in every condition of life; if, however, we throw this staff on the ground and use it only for unholy and unbecoming purposes, it often changes into a serpent and poisons the welfare of men and nations. Faith, accompanied by good deeds, is like a hand doing acts of charity; but if such a hand rests idly on our bosom or in our lap, it not seldom changes faith into cold inactivity or indifference.

XXXIX. IN CRUEL BONDAGE

While Moses was on his way to Egypt, God said to Aaron: "Go and meet thy brother in the desert." And Aaron went and met him by the mount of God, and kissed him; then Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord and all the signs which He had commanded him to perform. When they arrived in Egypt, they gathered together all the elders of Israel and Aaron related to them all the words which the Lord had said to Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. The people believed them, and when they heard that the Lord still remembered the children of Israel and had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and acknowledged God's kindness.

After this Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said: "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: 'Let my people go that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.'" Then Pharaoh said: "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."

On that very day Pharaoh commanded that no more straw be given to the Hebrews for use in making bricks, but that they should gather it for themselves. If they failed to make as many bricks as they had made before, when the straw was furnished to them, they were to be severely punished. Tyrants, like Pharaoh, so history teaches us, always have a bandage before their

eyes. Instead of lightening the burdens of the people, they make it harder by placing additional labor upon them. But by their own misdeeds, they hasten the era of freedom.

The taskmasters made the people scatter throughout the land to gather stubble and forced them to toil harder than ever. When the officers of the people complained to Pharaoh, he drove them from his presence. Then they reproached Moses and Aaron for having caused them to find ill-favor in the eyes of Pharaoh and for their being so cruelly treated. Moses thereupon prayed to God and said: "O Lord, wherefore didst thou bring so much evil upon this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me; for since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he has done more evil to these people; neither hast thou delivered them at all."

After these despondent words, God again sent Moses to the children of Israel and commanded him to tell them: "I am the Eternal and I will bring you out (וְהוֹצֵאתִי) from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will free you (וְהוֹצֵאתִי) and redeem you (וְגִאֲלֵתִי) with an outstretched arm and great judgments. And I will take you to me (וְלָקַחְתִּי) for a people, and I will be to you a God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you unto a land which I did swear to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a heritage. I am the Lord."

And Moses brought these words of God to the children of Israel, but they would not listen to him for anguish of spirit and for bitterness of heart (מקצר רוח ומעבדה קשה). Their hard labor and cruel treatment had so narrowed and depressed their minds that they were even unable to hear words of comfort and hope.

XL. THE TEN PLAGUES

God commanded Moses and Aaron to go and speak to Pharaoh, saying unto them: "When Pharaoh asks you to show him a miracle, then shall Aaron take his rod and cast it before Pharaoh and it shall become a serpent." When they came before Pharaoh they did as the Lord had told them and the rod turned into a serpent. But Pharaoh called his noted sorcerers and magicians and through their enchantments they performed the same thing. Every one cast down his rod, which was changed immediately into a serpent, but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. Pharaoh, however, remained hardened and refused to let the people go.

Then Moses and Aaron warned him that if he still refused to comply with their demands, God would visit him with additional punishments. As he remained deaf to their warnings, God afflicted him with the first plague. With his rod Aaron struck the waters of the river, and they turned into blood. The fish therein died and the

waters became so tainted that no one could drink from them; in fact, the waters of all Egypt were turned into blood. But Pharaoh's heart remained hardened.

Then Moses and Aaron warned him of the coming of the second plague. Aaron stretched out his rod over the streams, rivers, and ponds, and frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. But the magicians did the same with their enchantments and also brought up frogs. However, the magicians could not remove them again, and in his great perplexity Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron before him and said to them: "Entreat the Lord that he may take away the frogs and I will let the people go." So Moses prayed unto the Lord and the frogs disappeared. But when the danger was over, Pharaoh's heart hardened again and the second plague consequently failed in its purpose.

God, however, did not cease from His chastisement. Aaron was again directed to stretch out his rod, and to strike the dust of the land, causing vermin to come from the earth, affecting man and beast. The magicians tried to do the same, but they could not, and therefore they said to Pharaoh: "This is the finger of God." But in spite of all, Pharaoh's heart remained hardened.

Moses and Aaron warned him once more, but he did not listen to them. Then was sent the fourth plague, consisting of swarms of flies which spread over every house in Egypt, with the exception of the homes of the Israelites, living in the land of

Goshen. Alarmed by this punishment, Pharaoh called again for Moses and Aaron, telling them that they might go into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to their God. Moses prayed to God, and on the following day the swarms of flies disappeared. But no sooner were all matters set right again, when Pharaoh showed the same unyielding stubbornness.

Then God sent the fifth plague. A kind of pestilence, called murrain, broke out among the cattle, and all the cattle of the Egyptians died; but of the cattle of the children of Israel not one died. Even this calamity did not make any impression upon Pharaoh; his heart still remained wicked.

The sixth plague, which consisted of the appearance of boils on man and beast, had not the slightest effect upon the hardened sinner.

Then God said to Moses: "Stretch out thy hands toward the heavens, and I will cause a heavy hail-storm to come down over Egypt, over all men, cattle, and all things that grow upon the field." And Moses did what God had told him. Then there arose a heavy storm with hail, lightning and thunder, which destroyed numbers of men and animals, and every tree and plant, except those in Goshen. This was the seventh plague.

This time Pharaoh came down somewhat from his high and arrogant position. He summoned Moses and Aaron before him and said to them: "I have sinned indeed; the Lord is good and I and my people are wicked. Pray to God that He may take away the thunder and hail and I will

let you go." And Moses did so and the storm ceased. But in spite of Pharaoh's frank confession of his sinful behavior and his repenting words, he did not keep his promise; his confession was only lip-work, and his heart remained as before—hard and inflexible.

XLI. THE TEN PLAGUES—*Continued.*

Moses and Aaron again called upon Pharaoh, and threatened him with another plague—the locusts. Even Pharaoh's servants now begged and urged the wicked monarch to grant the desired liberty to the people in bondage, but he could not be persuaded to do so. He began again to bargain with Moses, and told him that the men might go, but that the women and children had to stay in Egypt. When Moses objected to this proposal, he and Aaron were driven from the palace.

Then the eighth plague came. God sent swarms of locusts into the land. These little pests ate up the fruits and every green thing which the hail had not destroyed, until there was not a leaf to be seen on the bushes or trees throughout all the land. Then Pharaoh again hastily sent for Moses and Aaron and asked them to forgive him only once more; he entreated them also to pray to God to take away the locusts. Moses prayed to God; but scarcely was the land rid of the locusts, when Pharaoh, unmindful of what had occurred before,

resumed his usual course of haughty stubbornness.

Then the Lord punished Pharaoh with the ninth plague. There came such a great darkness over all Egypt for almost three days, that the people could not see each other. But in the houses of the children of Israel there was light. Again Pharaoh called for Moses and said: "Go, serve the Lord, only let your flocks and herds stay; let your little children also go with you." But Moses insisted that the flocks and herds had to go with them, as they were needed for sacrifices and burnt offerings to the Eternal, their God. This answer did not please Pharaoh, and he said angrily: "Get thee from me, take heed of thyself, see my face no more, for on the day thou seest my face thou shalt surely die." And Moses said: "Thou hast spoken well; I will not see thy face again."

Let us pause here and consider the puzzling question, so often heard: Why did God harden the heart of Pharaoh? It was with Pharaoh as it is with a school-boy. Not every school-boy, as is shown by daily experience, is bettered by the punishment he receives. On the contrary, school-masters sometimes harden the temper of a boy by frequent chastisements and not seldom, indeed, make him callous and thoroughly indifferent; in fact, often crush in him all honor and self-respect. There are other boys, again, who can be controlled and corrected by a mere threatening look or the waving of the hand.

But in the case of Pharaoh, we find the key-

note of his determined stubbornness in the first answer he gave to Moses and Aaron, when he said: מִי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר אֶשְׁמַע בְּקוֹלוֹ—"Who is the Lord, that I shall listen to His voice? I do not know the Lord." In these words, which show his freedom of will, he declared at once his powerful resistance to the will of God, and as one noble deed usually begets another, so one evil act is generally followed by others.

God foresaw the unyielding stubbornness of Pharaoh's character, and how difficult it would be to impress him with better and nobler notions. But acting like a divine schoolmaster, He taught this tyrant that one cannot violate heaven's sacred authority nor the eternal laws of humanity, without being severely punished.

One plague more—the tenth one—God decreed to bring upon Pharaoh and his land, by means of which the haughty monarch should be forced to release the Israelites. Moses announced this intended chastisement to Pharaoh, saying: "Thus says the Eternal: 'About midnight I will pass through Egypt. At that hour every first-born in the land of Egypt will die, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sitteth on his throne, to the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill, and all the first-born of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, but against any of the children of Israel not a dog shall move his tongue, neither against man nor beast.' Then all thy servants shall come and bow down unto me, saying: 'Get thee out and all

the people that follow thee.' After that I will go out." And Moses went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.

XLII. ISRAEL'S DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.

At last the hour of liberation was approaching. God sent word by Moses to the children of Israel, that they should be ready on the night before the fifteenth day of the month of Abib (Nissan). He commanded Moses to tell them also, that on the tenth day of the month (four days previous to the fixed time), every one should take a lamb for his family, in fact, a lamb for each house. If the household of a man was too small for a lamb, then he should take one lamb together with his neighbor, according to the number of persons.

Then they should take a bundle of hyssop, dip it into the blood of the lamb and with it strike the lintel and the two side-posts of the house in which the meat was to be eaten. They were to eat it on the very night, roasted over the fire and together with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. "Thus shall it be eaten, with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet and your staff in your hand"; in fact, it must be eaten in haste, for it was a "*Pesach*," that is, a Passover offering to the Eternal, who would mercifully pass over the houses of the children of Israel, when He passed through Egypt to slay all the first-born from man to beast.

"And you must observe this day for an ordi-

nance. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you: 'What means this service?' then tell them it is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel when He smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses."

With this Passover festival is closely connected the religious home education of a child. What heart is not deeply impressed when reading the sentence, "If thy son will ask thee, what means this? then tell him what is necessary for his knowledge." Here, by this divine command, the father is prominently pointed out as the principal teacher and educator of his child. It is the home above all in which must be centred the religious education of a child. The father's duty to be the religious teacher of his children is mentioned four times in the books of Moses (Exodus xii. 26; xiii. 8; xiii. 14; Deuteronomy vi. 20).

It was midnight when the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of cattle. There was great lamentation in Egypt, for there was not a house in which there was not one dead. Then Pharaoh rose up in the night and quickly sent for Moses and Aaron and said to them: "Rise up and get you forth from among my people, both you and the children of Israel; go and serve the Lord as you have said. Take also your flocks and herds as you have said and be gone; and bless me also."

And the Egyptians also urged them to go, wishing them to leave the land in haste, for they said: "We are all in the hands of death."

Then the children of Israel, conducting themselves most orderly in the hour of their restored and bitterly contested liberty, hurried on and left Egypt. They had not even time to bake their bread; for this reason they carried their dough, before it was leavened, in the kneading troughs, which were bound up in their clothes, upon their shoulders, and afterward they made unleavened cakes of it. They took also their herds with them, as likewise those presents of gold, silver, and raiment, which the Egyptians, for services rendered to them, had given them so liberally.

In spite of great excitement, hard work, and much trouble, Moses did not forget to redeem a promise, given centuries before by his brethren to dying Joseph, and to fulfil a pious and most reverential duty to the memory of this good man, who had expressly requested his beloved ones to take his dead body from gloomy Egypt, to the bright regions of Canaan. A man like Moses, who had so much feeling and esteem for the dead, was the right man for the living.

About six hundred thousand men (not counting the children) went out from Egypt. With them went that mixed multitude (Erab-Rab) which afterward so greatly demoralized the Hebrews and thus proved how disadvantageously such a mixed crowd often works upon the morals and character of the people.

For about four hundred and thirty years the children of Israel had lived in Egypt. That famous night (Li'l-Shemurim) was a night to be observed unto the Lord for bringing the people out from the land of Egypt. It is a night of the Lord to be observed by all the children of Israel in their generations.

XLIII. THROUGH THE RED SEA

When Pharaoh liberated the children of Israel, the Lord directed Moses not to conduct them by the shortest way to Canaan, which was through the land of the Philistines, but through the wilderness by the Red Sea. And God went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them on the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give light to them.

After the people had departed, the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was again turned against the Israelites, and they said: "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" As Pharaoh believed that the Israelites were entangled in the wilderness, he took six hundred chosen chariots and all the chariots of Egypt and pursued them, overtaking them by the sea, where they were encamping.

When Pharaoh and his army drew nigh, the children of Israel saw them and became very much afraid of them and cried out unto the Lord. They strongly reproached Moses, saying: "Where-

fore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?" Then Moses said unto the people: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you to-day; for as you have seen the Egyptians to-day, you shall not see them again any more forever. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace" (יִהְיֶה יָלָחֶם לָכֶם וַאֲתֵם תַּחֲרֹשׁוּ)

And the Lord said unto Moses: "Tell the children of Israel that they go forward,"—for "forward" must always be our aim in life, not backward. "Stretch out thy hand with thy rod over the sea and divide it, and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. The Egyptians will follow, but I shall show my power over Pharaoh and all his house."

The pillar of cloud went from before the face of the Israelites and stood behind them; and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. That side which was turned toward Pharaoh's army grew very dark and dismal and prevented his soldiers from seeing whether they were near the Israelites. But that side of the cloud which was turned toward the Israelites was bright and luminous. Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and the Lord caused the waters to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

Then the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground, and the waters formed a wall on each side of them. Quickly the

Egyptians pursued them and went in after them, together with Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and horsemen. And it happened toward morning that the Lord greatly troubled the host of the Egyptians as they were marching through the sea. He made the wheels of their chariots come off, so that they could move on but slowly. In this calamity, the Egyptians called out: "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fights for them."

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared. The Egyptians fled for the shore, but the Lord overthrew them in the midst of the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that came after them into the sea; there remained of them not even one. Thus the Eternal saved Israel on that day from the hands of the Egyptians. The children of Israel saw the great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians. "And they believed in the Lord and his servant, Moses."

We usually strengthen our belief by what we see with our own eyes. We often notice in life that by what we sin we are commonly punished. Pharaoh caused the death of the male children by drowning them in the river; he himself found a similar death in the waters of the Red Sea.

The wonderful deliverance of our people on the banks of the Red Sea inspired them to sing a song which is not only one of the oldest in history, but

it is pervaded also with the most pious sentiments and elevating thoughts. It was Moses, who being joined by all the Israelites, started this song, by saying:

I. Thanks to God.

I will sing unto the Lord,
For he is very powerful;
The horse and his rider
He has thrown into the sea.
He became my salvation;
He is my God
And him I will praise!
He is the God of my father
And I will exalt him!

II. Speaking of the Enemy.

The enemy said: I will pursue,
I will overtake, divide the spoil;
My anger shall be satisfied upon them,
My hand shall destroy them.

III. Speaking of God's punishment to the Egyptians.

Thou didst blow with Thy wind;
The sea covered them;
They sank as lead
Into the mighty waters.

IV. Praising God's Almighty Hand.

Who is like unto thee, O Eternal,
Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders!

The song concludes with those grand and sublime words: "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever."

The Hebrews were always noted for their love of music. Music was to them, in days of joy and earnest reflection, a source of recreation and comfort.

When Moses and the children of Israel had finished their song, Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron and Moses, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam at the head of this joyful procession raised her voice and sang so beautifully: "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he hath thrown into the sea."

XLIV. IN THE WILDERNESS

After expressing great joy over their deliverance from the Egyptians, the children of Israel continued on their march. They journeyed three days in the desert of Shur without finding any water to drink, and of course this was a very hard and unaccustomed trial for them. They then moved to a place called Mara, where they found bitter waters (Mara means bitterness). Thereupon the people murmured against Moses and said: "What shall we drink?" Upon which the Lord showed Moses a kind of wood, which, when thrown into the water, made it sweet.

Thus God tried the people and taught them, as a father teaches his children. The people had to

learn to bear privations and to win new courage by their trust in God. All hard labor is at first bitter and disagreeable, but in mixing our heavy tasks with the sweet of contentment, we make them lighter and more pleasant.

From Mara, the children of Israel went to Elim; there were twelve wells and seventy palm trees, and the people encamped near the waters. Here again they murmured against Moses and Aaron, and said unto them: "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and did eat bread to the full, for ye have brought us forth into the wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Then God said to Moses: "Behold, I will cause bread to rain from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a certain portion every day. Tell them also that in the evening they shall have meat, and in the morning they shall be satisfied with bread."

Moses and Aaron announced this to the people, and it came to pass that at eventide quails came up and covered the camp; thus the people had their desired meat. But in the morning the dew lay round the camp, and when it had disappeared, behold, upon the surface of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoarfrost on the ground. When the children of Israel saw this they said: "What is this?" (Man-hu), for they did not know what it was. And Moses said unto them: "This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat. This is the thing

which the Lord has commanded: 'Gather of it every body according to his need.' "

Then Moses said further: "Let no man leave of it till the morning." Many did not heed this warning and kept some of it until the morning, when it was found to be full of worms. Profiting by this experience, they gathered it fresh every morning, for when the sun grew hot the manna melted away. On the sixth day, every person gathered twice as much as usual. When Moses was informed of this he said: "This is what the Lord has said, 'A day of rest, a holy Sabbath is to-morrow unto the Lord'; that which remaineth over from your gathered food lay aside until the morning." They laid it away until the morning, as Moses had told them, and it was not spoiled. Some of the people, however, disobeying the strict command forbidding them to gather on the seventh day, were disappointed and found none.

Then Moses said to the people: "How long, says the Eternal, will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? The Lord has given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; stay ye every one in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." So the people rested on the seventh day.

The children of Israel daily received their food (manna) from Heaven, but were obliged to gather it personally. Man should trustfully look up to God for the granting of his daily needs; but this trust in God must always be combined

with self-help and love of labor. We must likewise look after our own support and living in the morning of our life, when we are young and vigorous; if we wait until noon-tide, when the sun has fully risen וְהַשֶּׁשֶׁשׁ וְהַזֶּמֶם we fail in our efforts and they result in naught.

XLV. THE AMALEKITES

It had been wonderfully shown in Jewish history that whenever our people became lax in their religious faith, and did not put their whole trust in our heavenly Father, bitter enemies arose who tried to destroy our good name and to injure us on our way through life.

The children of Israel continued their journey and encamped in Rephidim. Here again they had no water to drink. Then the people reproached Moses and said: "Give us water that we may drink." And Moses said unto them: "Why do you reproach me; wherefore do you tempt the Lord?" But the people were thirsting for water and murmured against Moses, saying: "Wherefore is this, that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying: "What shall I do unto this people? They are almost ready to stone me."

Then the Lord said unto Moses: "Go on before the people and take with thee some of the elders of Israel, and the rod with which thou smotest the river, take in thy hand. Behold, I will stand before thee upon the rock in Horeb, and thou

shalt smite the rock and then shall water come out of it, so that thy people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the name of the place Massa and Meriba (temptation and strife), because the children of Israel were murmuring and lost faith in God by saying: "Is the Lord among us or not?" (הֲיֵשׁ יְהוָה בְּקִרְבָּנוּ אִמָּאֵן)

Here, in Rephidim, the Israelites were suddenly attacked by the Amalekites. This treacherous people, descendants of Esau, were the first to war with Israel, and in so doing the Amalekites did not act like brave warriors, but like deceitful cowards. They attacked and killed those who were in the rear of the journeying multitude—the aged, the women, and the little children.

By order of Moses, Joshua, his servant, together with other brave men, was chosen to fight against Amalek. On this occasion, Moses, Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill. Then it came to pass that when Moses held up his hands Israel succeeded, but when he let down his hands Amalek was victorious. When the hands of Moses became tired, Aaron and Hur took a stone and put it under him and he sat thereon, and both of them held up his hands, one on each side, and his hands remained steady (וַיְהִי יָדָיו אֶמְצָנָה) until the going down of the sun (עַד־בֹּא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ). Thus Joshua and the Israelites defeated the Amalekites.

XLVI. AMALEK AND JETHRO

There are two important incidents which happened to our people in the first period of their going out of Egypt. The one was the fight with Amalek, and the other was the friendly visit of Jethro to Moses, of which we shall speak later. These two men—Amalek and Jethro—represent the very types or figures which in almost every century have been so closely connected with Israel's history. While Amalek represents everything slanderous and untruthful that is said against us, it is Jethro, the Midianitish priest, who, with his righteous and clear judgment, shows his real and heartfelt sympathy with Israel, and openly and frankly confesses that the Lord is greater than all the other gods (עֵתָּה יִרְעָתִי בִּיְהוָה מִכָּל הָאֱלֹהִים).

It has always been a comfort to us that while, on the one hand, Israel must often endure the fierce attacks and evil reproaches of an Amalek, who either openly or in cunning disguise has shown himself as our enemy and persecutor, yet, on the other hand, the spirit of Jethro, passing with us through the world, has always tried to set us right in the eyes of our fellow-men and has demanded for us that "heaven-born justice" which ought to be granted to all children of man.

Thus we might say, with full truthfulness, that although we have been blindly persecuted by the spiritual descendants of Amalek, still we have been greatly befriended and encouraged by people acting in the spirit of Jethro.

But let us profit by our experience. It is a fact proven by history, that whenever Israel became lukewarm and indifferent to God and our religion (הַיִּשְׁרָאֵל בְּקִרְבָּנוֹ אִם-אֵין), then Amalek's power greatly increased; but when we showed fervor and pious devotion toward our heavenly Father, then the slanderous charges and hostile attacks of our enemies did not inflict much harm or injury upon us.

A splendid example of how to defeat Amalek is given us by the grand picture of Moses on the hill, witnessing the fierce battle between Joshua, with his brave men, and the cowardly foe. When Moses lifted up his hands toward heaven, Israel was successful; but when he lowered his hands toward the earth, Amalek gained in strength. And so it will ever be. Our strength lies in our lifting up our eyes to God, but our weakness will always be in the lowering or keeping down of our hands to the earth. Therefore let us repeat once more those noble words: "And Moses' hands remained steady until the sun went down." (וַיְהִי יָדָיו אֲמוֹנָה עַד-בֹּא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ)

XLVII. JETHRO ADVISES MOSES

While in the desert, Moses received a visit from his father-in-law, Jethro, who brought to him his wife and his two sons, who, while Moses was carrying out God's will in Egypt, had been left in charge of the old father in Midian. Moses heartily welcomed his father-in-law and told him all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and how He had

delivered the Israelites from bondage. Jethro was greatly pleased with what he heard, and he praised the Lord, who, in such a wonderful way, had shown His love and kindness for Israel. Moses highly honored his father-in-law, and he invited Aaron and the elders to meet him.

It is usually the case when we are brought into contact with a new order of things that we show our politeness by praising whatever we see or notice. Such was not the case with Jethro. When he saw that Moses alone acted as judge of the people from morning to evening, he frankly said unto him: "The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou shouldst have assistants, who will conscientiously aid thee in thy heavy work and lighten thy responsibilities. Take my advice, and appoint men as rulers over thousands and over hundreds, over fifties and over tens. But in selecting those men, you must be very particular and careful. Not every man is fit for such a place; intelligence and moral character are vital and necessary points in choosing such men. If you follow my counsel, select for your present requirements able men, such as fear God (אֱנָשִׁי חַיִּל יְרֵאָה אֱלֹהִים), men of truth (אֱנָשִׁי אֱמֶת) and men who hate covetousness (שֹׂנְאֵי בָצֵעַ)."

These are the qualities which must adorn every man who works for the welfare of the people, be it in our homes or schools, in our congregations or political assemblies. And Moses, though almost eighty-two years old, listened to the words of his father-in-law; he did not believe himself overwise, nor did he say, "I can learn nothing from

this man." He was trained in the school of long experience and was therefore thankful for any sound advice given to him. He knew that it was never too late to learn.

XLVIII. SINAI AND THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of Egypt, they came to Mount Sinai and encamped before it. Moses went up on the mountain, and God said to him: "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob and to the children of Israel [the house of Jacob meaning here chiefly the women, who exercise the greatest influence on the religious education of their children], 'You have seen what I have done unto the Egyptians, and how I have borne you on eagles' wings and have brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine. You shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' "

Then Moses went down and told the people the words of God, upon which they answered: "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." Then the Eternal said unto Moses: "Tell the people that they should sanctify themselves to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes." [Cleanliness, next to godliness, is, for body and mind, one of the most important conditions of our lives.] "They shall be ready on the third day, for

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on that day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai. Set also bounds round about, and tell the people that they shall neither go up to the mount nor touch the border of it." Moses prepared the people for the occasion, saying to them: "Be ready for the third day."

Just as there are local boundaries which we are forbidden to overstep, so there are mental boundaries which, in spite of all reasoning, hinder us from fully understanding the divine.

On the third day, when morning broke, there was thunder and lightning; a thick cloud hung upon the mountain and the voice of a trumpet was heard in thrilling sounds. All the people in the camp were frightened and trembled. But Moses brought them forth to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. It was altogether hidden in smoke, for the Lord descended on it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace and the whole mount quaked greatly. The sound of the trumpet became louder and louder every moment. Then Moses spoke and God answered him, saying:

I. I am the Eternal, thy God, who has brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

II. Thou shalt have no other gods besides me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, nor any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them nor serve them, for I, the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God, visit-

ing the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me; but showing mercy unto thousands of those that love me and keep my commandments.

III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain.

IV. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: on it thou shalt not do any work; neither thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is therein, and rested on the seventh; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

V. Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

VI. Thou shalt not kill.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

The people were very much afraid when they

heard the voice of God, and said to Moses: "Speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Then Moses said to the people: "Fear not, for God has come to prove you, so that his fear [reverence] may be before your faces, that ye sin not." But Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. And the Lord said unto him: "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: 'Ye have seen that I have spoken to you from heaven. Ye shall not make unto me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto me gods of gold. An altar of earth shall ye make unto me and shall sacrifice thereon your burnt-offerings and your peace-offerings. In all places where I inscribe my name, I will come unto thee and bless thee.' "

XLIX. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

By the First Commandment, "I am the Lord the Eternal," etc., we are told of the existence of God, who, as the Father of Israel and all mankind, delivered us from Egyptian bondage. God does not tolerate that one man should be the slave of another. Being the guardian of freedom, He is our Rock and Redeemer forever and ever.

By the Second Commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods besides me nor make to thyself any likeness nor image," etc., we are commanded to worship God only in the purest spirit. The heathens, and among them the cultured Greeks and Romans, worshipped many things above and upon the earth; but we Jews know one and only

one God, who, as the supreme Ruler, directs the lives of individuals and the destinies of nations.

Concerning the words, "who visits the sins of the father upon the third and fourth generations and shows his mercy unto the thousandth generation," it appears quite natural that the bad example of parents, being followed by their children, leaves traces behind which pass through three and four generations. Daily life and history confirm this fact. The tragical end of Louis XVI. in modern France, upon whom, as it appears, the sins of his predecessors were heaped, and other examples in history, fully testify to the truth of this commandment. We must remember, however, that God's mercy lasts unto the thousandth generation. We Jews, in some measure, enjoy the benefits of the good acts of our pious fathers (זכות אבות).

By the Third Commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of thy God in vain," etc., we are told not to use God's name in making an untruthful statement. Truthfulness in word and deed is one of the noblest of virtues and makes him who possesses it trustworthy and honorable in the eyes of God and his fellow-men.

There are two words which, in meaning and importance, are almost equal to a little Bible. These words are "Kiddush Hashem" and "Chillul Hashem." By "Kiddush Hashem," we honor our religion by our righteous dealings with man, by our own humility, and by the interest and sympathy we show in the concerns of our neighbor (Hillel). But by "Chillul Hashem," every act

which violates the everlasting principles of righteousness, justice, and truth, we profane and lower the holiness of God and the religion we believe in.

By the Fourth Commandment we are taught: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Man should neither be a slave nor a mere machine, and as constant labor will drag him down altogether, so this day was given to him for his elevation. The Sabbath day emphasizes two points, which never should be overlooked. It reminds us, first, that God rested on the seventh day after six days of labor, and secondly, that our people, having been under continual bondage while in Egypt, it is necessary for us to have one day of holy liberty in the week.

Moreover, our homes become more sanctified through the Sabbath day. While during the week the members of the family may be dispersed or absent, it is the Sabbath day which calls them together to take part in the divine service in temple or synagogue, and gathers them around the family table, thus filling their minds with holy and noble impressions.

The Fifth Commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother, in order that thou mayest live long in the land," fervently appeals to our children, to our sons and daughters. It is not said here, Thou shalt *love* thy parents, for such love is natural and born within us; however, to honor father and mother is an act which is prompted by our kind and loving hearts. We must obey our parents, we must never contradict them; we must

speak to them gently, and we must help them bear their burdens in their struggles and hardships. We must ever try to cheer and brighten their days as they go through life; and if occasion requires it, we must be ready to support them; but this support must be given in such a willing, loving, and refined manner that the parents may not feel that they are dependent. We often hear people say that a father can support six children, but six children can scarcely support a father.

L. HOW TO HONOR FATHER AND MOTHER

A high-priest once lost a very precious jewel from his costly garment, and messengers were sent out to find another like it. One of them finally learned that Damah, a heathen, the son of Nithai, possessed such a jewel, and two priests went at once to purchase it. "We hear," they said to Damah, "that thou hast a stone which will replace the one lost from the high-priest's garment; sell it to us and we will give you five hundred gold pieces for it." Damah was satisfied with the offer and was about to enter an adjoining room, when he stopped and returned. The priests, thinking that he was not satisfied with the price, offered him six hundred gold pieces. "Wait," said Damah; "my father sleeps in yonder room; I cannot give you the stone now, even if you were to give me double the sum. I would not and could not awaken my father, nor disturb him in his sleep."

The priests were filled with admiration at the filial conduct of the noble son and waited pa-

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tiently until the father awoke. When the old man at last arose from his couch, Damah fetched the jewel. Then the priests gave him the six hundred gold pieces, but Damah returned one hundred pieces, saying: "I am content with the first offer you made and do not wish that you should pay me for the reverence which I owe to my father."

The older of the priests blessed the noble-souled young man, and said to his companion: "Thus do we learn from a heathen how to honor father and mother and how to act justly on earth."

Merely to support one's parents is not sufficient; the honor lies in the manner and spirit in which we assist them in their need.

A rabbi once delivered a sermon to his pupils, taking his text from the Talmud. He said to them: "There are persons who feed their fathers with dainty and expensive dishes, and yet are regarded with contempt; while others, who permit the aged father to move the heavy mill-stone the whole day long, enter paradise and are remembered with blessings.

"A son once placed before his father a well-prepared meal. The father was highly pleased, thanked his son, and asked him: 'Why do you gladden me to-day with such a splendid meal?' Then the son, answering his father in a rude and unfeeling tone, said: 'Old people who are unable to earn anything must be content to enjoy that which is placed before them and to be silent.' The astonished father did not eat anything at all, but left the table weeping bitterly.

"Now let us take another illustration. A young

laborer earned his daily bread by working in a mill. When the king of the country ordered numbers of his subjects to improve various parts of his lands and roads by means of their heavy toil, such a summons also came to the father of the young laborer. But the son said: 'Dear father, you are too old to do such heavy work, besides you may be ill-treated by the overseers.' But the father said: 'It is the command of the king, and I must obey.' 'Well,' said the son, 'I am young and can bear more. Work thou in the mill instead of me; it is much better that I go to do the king's work and that thou have the easier task.' Then the son went, and the father did the son's work in the mill. Who treated his father better, he who provided him with costly dishes or he who gave him frugal meals and an easier task?"

Among the many good traits for which the wise King Solomon is noted is also the one that he greatly honored his mother, Bath-Sheba. Once when she called upon him, he quickly rose from his throne, went to meet her, bowed himself before her, and made her sit near him.

LI. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS—*Continued*

The Sixth Commandment, in saying "Thou shalt not kill," impresses upon us the great value of human life. Man is created in the image of God, and whosoever purposely destroys this image in the person of his fellow-man is inhuman and dishonors both God and mankind. Nor must we

shorten the life of a man by causing him vexation or trouble, or by making his days on earth miserable and wretched. It is also a crime to take our own life. We must bear many hardships in this world. It was Jacob who openly confessed to Pharaoh that during the many years he had passed on earth, he had seen "numbers of evil days." How did he arm himself against these days? His religious spirit made him confide in God, and, strengthened by his favorite motto, "Upon thy help I hope, O Lord," he overcame his troubles.

In the Seventh Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," we are taught to look upon the holy ties of marriage as a sacred bond between husband and wife. Whoever tries to weaken this bond or seeks by slander and false charges to bring about a quarrel between two united persons, commits a wretched act and deserves the contempt of man.

In the Eighth Commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," we are directed to regard the property of our neighbor as dear and sacred to us. We must not take anything that belongs to another; we must be honest in our dealings with man; we must neither cheat nor defraud, but we must act in all our trading and commercial undertakings in good faith and with a clear conscience. We must never deprive our neighbor of his customers, nor seek to injure him by false reports about his business or trade. We must also be responsible for every cent we owe and never try to enrich ourselves at the cost or expense of our creditors.

In the Ninth Commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," we are taught the sacredness of one's word. Every word which we utter should always bear the stamp of truth. One of the most disgraceful creatures is the shameless liar, whose words, like false coin, so easily impose upon the public. We must guard our tongue in judging our neighbor and never utter a word about him which is not strictly true.

No one is more to be despised than a tale-bearer, whom the Bible terms "rachil" (Leviticus xix. 16), which term originally meant "a peddler," one who carries his wares from house to house. There is also much of truth in Shakespeare's wise sentence: "He who steals my purse steals trash; but he who steals my good name, steals something which is of no use to the slanderer, but which makes me poor indeed."

The Tenth Commandment sums up all the words spoken on Sinai with that great precept, "Thou shalt not covet." Our eyes or heart often covet that which belongs to our neighbor. For this reason, Moses impressed upon the Israelites the important command that they should not blindly follow the inclinations of their hearts or eyes, either of which might lead them astray (ולא תתורו אחר לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם).

Covetousness was always one of the worst evils of the world. Not every one is contented with what he has. Because some people live in better manner or enjoy a greater portion of prosperity, others constantly try to imitate them and seek to raise themselves, even by unworthy means, to

the same plane. Beautiful is that spirit of contentment, so splendidly expressed in the proverbs of Solomon (xxx. 7-9): "Two things do I require of thee; do not deny them to me, before I die. Remove from me all false show and lying words; give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient to me, lest I become proud and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I become poor and steal and take the name of my God in vain."

LII. THE GOLDEN CALF

After the Ten Words, as the Commandments are sometimes called, had been given to the people, Moses was commanded to ascend the mountain and receive from God the two tablets of stone, on which the Commandments were written. Accompanied by Joshua, who was stationed between him and the camp, Moses went up the mountain and remained there forty days and forty nights. He received the two tablets, was informed of other laws and precepts which he had to lay before the people, and was moreover commanded to erect "a sanctuary to the Lord."

It is an old rule among schoolmasters to deeply impress one lesson upon the pupils before proceeding with the next. It is a fact that the Ten Words had not been fully impressed upon the minds and hearts of the people, for when they saw that Moses did not return from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron, and said unto him: "Hasten, make us gods, which shall go before us;

for this man Moses, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has become of him." Aaron, thinking that the women would not deprive themselves of their ornaments, asked them for the golden rings which they and their children had in their ears. But as is so often the case, they thought that nothing was too good or too precious to offer to their idols. They took off their golden earrings and brought them to Aaron. He received them from their hands, and made a molten calf of them. When the people saw this they said: "These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Then Aaron built an altar and exclaimed: "To-morrow is a feast to the Lord," by which he no doubt meant to lay stress upon the name of the Lord. On the following morning they rose up very early, offered up burnt and peace offerings to their idol, and after this, passed away their time in eating, drinking, and rejoicing.

Then God said to Moses: "Go down, for thy people, whom thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, have gone astray. They have quickly turned aside from the way I commanded them; they have made themselves a molten calf, have worshipped it and have sacrificed unto it, and have said: 'These are thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.' Behold, it is a stiff-necked people (עם קשה עורף); I will consume them and make of thee a great nation."

But Moses entreated God not to do so (וַיַּחֲלֵ מֹשֶׁה) and pleaded for his sinful people, saying: "Where-

fore should the Egyptians speak and exclaim: For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth." In mentioning the Egyptians, Moses clearly hinted at the power of public opinion, which should not be disregarded in our dealings with man. And God, remembering the promise he had given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, declared he would not destroy the Israelites.

Moses then went down the mountain with the two tablets of stone in his hand. From a distance were heard the noise and shouting of the people. Then Joshua said to Moses: "There is a noise of war in the camp," but Moses answered: "It is neither the shout of victory, nor the cry of defeat, but it is the noise of singing we hear." When they came nearer to the camp, Moses saw the golden calf and the people dancing around it. Then he became very angry, and, carried away by his fierce wrath, he threw down the two tablets of stone so that they broke into many pieces. He then took the calf, burnt it, ground it to a powder, strewed the dust on the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.

He rebuked Aaron severely for having made the golden calf. Aaron tried to excuse himself for his guilty act by saying: "The people came to me saying: 'Make us gods, which shall go before us, for we do not know what has become of Moses.' Then I told them, 'Whosoever has any gold let him bring it to me'; so it was brought to me. I then cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf." This childish excuse, by which

Aaron tried to free himself from guilt, is exceedingly poor and feeble. Moreover, it was a grave mistake for Moses to have placed a man like Aaron at the head of the people during his absence. Aaron, yielding too easily to the wishes of the people, was by no means a strong character, nor firm enough for such an occasion. Joshua, the soldier, was better suited for the task.

LIII. MOSES SPEAKS WITH GOD

When the first outburst of anger was over, Moses placed himself at the gate of the camp and said that all men who were on the Lord's side should come to him. Then all the men who were descendants of the tribe of Levi came to him. He told them to take their swords and go through the camp from one end to another, and to slay every man they met. The Levites did as Moses told them, and they slew that day about three thousand men. This harsh measure was necessary to quell the rebellious spirit of the people.

On the following day he said to them: "You have sinned a great sin, and now I will go up again unto the Lord; perhaps I may obtain forgiveness for you." Hereupon Moses returned unto the Lord and said: "This people have sinned a great sin and have made themselves gods of gold. But now, O Lord, forgive them their sins, but if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." And the Lord said unto Moses: "Whosoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book"—that is, every one

is responsible for his own sins and must bear the consequences of his evil deeds—"Therefore, now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken to thee; behold, my angel shall go before thee; but I will visit their sins upon them."

And Moses said unto the Lord: "See, thou hast said unto me, 'Bring up this people,' but thou didst not tell me whom thou wilt send with me. Now, therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now the way, that I may know thee, and may find grace in thy sight; and consider that this nation is thy people." And God said: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest; for thou hast found grace in my sight and I know thee by name."

Then Moses said: "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." And God answered: "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy to whom I will show mercy. But my face thou canst not see, for no man shall see me and live." And the Lord continued: "Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock. It shall then come to pass while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover thee with my hand while I pass by, and then I will take away my hand and thou shalt see my back (אַחֲרַי), but my face (פָּנַי) shall not be seen."

As a mortal being, man cannot look into the workshop of God and fully understand His wise plans and designs; we can only behold or trace

His mighty works in those divine revelations which He daily makes pass before our eyes, and which are so clearly shown in the lives of people, in the realm of nature, and in the history of the world and mankind.

And God said to Moses: "Hew two tablets of stone, like unto the first, and I will write upon these tablets the words which were on the first tablets, which thou didst break. Be ready in the morning and come up upon Mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me on the top of the mount. No one shall come with thee; neither let any one be seen throughout all the mount."

Moses did as God commanded. Then the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him and exclaimed: יהוה יהוה אל רחום וחנון ארך אפים ורב חסד ואמת "The Lord, the Lord, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin."

Moses bowed his head toward the earth and worshipped. Then he said: "If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, I pray thee, go again among us, for they are a stiff-necked people. Pardon our iniquity and our sin and take us for thine inheritance." And the Lord said: "Behold, I make a covenant; before all thy people, I will do wonders, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord, for it is a great thing that I will do with thee."

And the Lord said unto Moses: "Write down these words, and know that I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel." Now Moses was forty days and forty nights with the Lord; he did neither eat bread nor drink water, so thoroughly was he wrapped up in his divine work. He then wrote down again the words of the covenant, the Ten Words, on both the tablets and left the mountain. When he came down, having the two tablets of testimony in his hand, he did not know that his face was shining.

When Aaron and Israel saw him, behold, his face was shining and they were afraid to come near him. Then Moses called them to him and told them what the Lord had said to him on Mount Sinai. After he had spoken to them, he put a veil on his face. When Moses went to speak to the Lord he took off the veil, but when he spoke to the children of Israel, then the skin of his face was shining, and he put the veil upon his face.

The rougher our occupation is, the more it is shown on our faces; the finer it is, the more it ennobles our countenances. Moses being so often in the presence of God, his face shone with the light of divinity.

LIV. THE SANCTUARY AND THE PRIESTS

After Moses descended from Mount Sinai, he ordered the Sanctuary (Mikdash) to be built, as commanded by God: "And they shall make me a Sanctuary that I may dwell among them."

He called upon the people of Israel to bring him gifts, so much as each one was willing to offer for such a sacred purpose. They brought gold, silver, copper and jewels; likewise blue, scarlet, and purple wool, fine linen and goat's hair, dyed rams' and badgers' skins, and also shittim wood. Women of taste and skill brought that which they had spun of fine linen. The women in particular showed great interest and zeal in the carrying out of the sacred work, and it seemed that they wanted to wipe away, through their earnest efforts, the great error they had committed in helping to make the golden calf.

For the architect of the Sanctuary, Bezaleel, Uri's son, of the tribe of Judah, was selected; and it was God who put wisdom and understanding in his heart (אֵשׁ חָכְמָה לֵב), so that he knew all manner of work for the service of the Sanctuary. He had a most able assistant in Aholiab, of the tribe of Dan. These two and other men of ability were entrusted with the execution of this holy work. It is indeed most remarkable how apt, artistic, and skilful our people must have been in every handicraft while in the desert. Who can deny that they possessed a proper taste and decided talent for all the trades and arts?

As the Israelites were dwelling in tents, which could be moved quickly, so the Sanctuary was likewise movable and could be readily set up in any place where they encamped. It was also called "Tabernacles" (Mishkan), the place of assembly, and consisted of three sections—the "Court," the

"Holy," and the "Most Holy." The Court, surrounding the Tabernacle, had a length of one hundred cubits and a breadth of fifty cubits. A cubit is estimated variously as from nineteen to twenty-six inches. It was provided with hangings of fine linen, five cubits in height. The Tabernacle was thirty cubits long, ten cubits broad, and ten cubits high. It was made of shittim wood overlaid with gold. A curtain with figures of Cherubim separated the Holy from the Most Holy. The Holy was twenty cubits long, ten cubits broad, and ten cubits high; the Most Holy was ten cubits in length, breadth, and height.

In the Court stood the altar made of brass and a laver of the same material for the priest. In the Holy stood the table, overlaid with gold, upon which the twelve shew-breads, made of wheaten-flour, were placed and which were changed for fresh ones every Sabbath. There were also the golden candlesticks, made with much artistic skill; and thirdly, there stood the altar, likewise overlaid with gold, and which was used mornings and evenings for incense offerings.

In the Most Holy was the Ark, in which the broken and the complete tablets of the Ten Commandments were deposited. This Ark was adorned with gold within and without; upon the cover were two golden figures, Cherubim, with extended wings. The cover with the Cherubim on it was called the "Mercy Seat." In this seat Moses heard the voice of God, telling him what to say to Israel. None but the high priest was permitted

to enter the Most Holy, and then only on the Day of Atonement.

In order to distinguish the priests from other persons, special garments were worn by them. The high-priest was particularly distinguished by his garments and ornaments. He also wore an "Ephod," a garment which covered the upper part of the body and upon which was fastened the breast-plate with the "Urim and Tummim" (Light and Right). This breast-plate contained twelve precious stones set in gold, and on each was inscribed the name of one of the twelve tribes. Upon the head was the mitre, with the plate of gold, upon which was engraven the words: "Holy to the Eternal."

The house of Aaron was especially chosen for the offices of the priesthood, Aaron being appointed high-priest and the other sons of Levi being charged with the principal service in the Holy Place. The blessing which the priest spoke over the people, a blessing indeed, which is still known and pronounced in all temples of Israel, is contained in those beautiful words: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace."

LV. THE SACRIFICES

When the Sanctuary was finished, the so-called "sacrificial service" was introduced into Israel. This form of worship, which was easily understood

by the people, was not quite new, for Cain and Abel, Noah and others had already brought sacrifices to God.

There are various kinds of sacrifices mentioned in the Third Book of Moses, which book is known under the name of Leviticus. The first sacrifice is called the burnt-offering (עֹלָה). Such an offering could be of either cattle, sheep, or fowl, but it had to be without any blemish, to indicate, no doubt, that he who brought the sacrifice could please God only by a pure and perfect life, free from all fault and sin. Before the animal was killed, the person who offered it had to lay his hand upon the head of the animal (S'micho), confessing thereby his sin and imploring God's pardon. Such an act naturally led to self-knowledge, which, after all, is the best means of self-improvement. The offering was entirely burned upon the altar (עֹלָה), for the Lord does not want anything "half-done." "You shall be perfect with the Lord your God."

A second sacrifice was the meat-offering (מִנְחָה), which consisted of flour, incense, and oil, or was taken from the first fruits of the corn, the sweet flavor of which was to ascend to heaven. In bringing this offering, the pious Israelite thanked the Lord for his earthly welfare, for the fruitfulness of his fields and acres, and for other benefits. No leaven was permitted to be used, for leaven was the symbol of pride and sin, but salt was demanded as a seasoning.

A third kind of sacrifice was the peace or joy-offering (שְׁלָמִים), consisting of cattle, sheep, or

goats, which were offered out of gratitude on happy family occasions.

A fourth kind of sacrifice was known as sin-offerings (חטאת). In bringing these offerings, the people frankly confessed that although they had deserved the penalty of death, still God in His great mercy does by no means desire the death of the sinner, but rather wishes that he turn from his evil ways by repenting and by promising to live a new and better life.

Since the destruction of Jerusalem, we have had no sacrifices of this kind. Instead of them, we approach God by prayer. We have prayers of thanks, of joy, of penitence and submission. It is a beautiful custom of our fathers to pray regularly in the morning (Shacharith), in the afternoon (Mincha), and in the evening (Maarib).

Besides prayers, we approach and please God by acts of goodness and kindness, by deeds of charity, compassion, and love. Our sages tell us, that once when Rabbi Joshua was looking at the fallen city of Jerusalem, he broke out into those sorrowful words: "Woe to us, that the place in which Israel by sacrifices found forgiveness from his sins, is ruined." It was then that Johannan ben Saccai answered him: "Compose thyself, my friend; we have now found that the best way to make atonement is by doing kind and charitable acts. Loving and heart-cheering deeds can at all times reconcile us to our heavenly Maker. Look at Daniel, who lived on Babylonian soil. He likewise could not bring sacrifices, but he approached and worshipped our God and Father

by his love for his fellow-man, by helping every one who needed his aid, and by giving his sympathy to all who might be benefited by it."

LVI. AN IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY

There was one form of ceremony applied by Moses to sanctify Aaron and his sons for their priestly offices, which conveys to us a most beautiful idea. Moses, as the Bible tells us, called Aaron and his sons, and put some of the blood of a slaughtered ram upon the tips of their right ears and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet. This ceremony, regarding ear, hand, and foot, contains an excellent moral lesson. The priest, it teaches us, shall have sanctified ears, in order that he may always hear the voice of truthfulness and justice, which is the voice of God, and not listen to the voice of selfishness, wilfulness and arrogance; he also shall have two sanctified hands, which he should not soil by greediness and corruption, nor by acts of wrong-doing and falsehood; he shall have sanctified feet, with which he shall walk in the path of righteousness and integrity.

Like the priests, every human being should be thus sanctified in a similar manner. This ceremony, although of great meaning, did not appear to have made any impression upon Aaron's two eldest sons. On the eighth day of the dedication of the Sanctuary, Nadab and Abihu took their censers to burn incense therein, but instead of using the holy fire which was constantly kept

burning on the divine altar, they took strange fire from without (אֵשׁ זָרָה), which was strictly forbidden. Then a fire came down from heaven and burned them to death.

Moses, in trying to console Aaron, told him that it was the Lord who said, "Through those who stand near me, I will be sanctified;" in other words, the more sacred our professional position is in life, the more we must try to perform our duties in the very manner God has prescribed them to us. The two sons of Aaron had forgotten themselves, perhaps on account of the festal occasion, and acted unlawfully. Whether it is in small or great matters, we must do exactly the very things we are told to do as servants of the Lord.

As is often the case with young men in office, they did not listen to the advice of their elders. If the two priests had followed Moses' and Aaron's counsel, they would not have acted so unlawfully. The strength and the courage which Aaron developed on this occasion, in mastering his parental grief, shows us how heroically he bore his misfortune, and how much he trusted in the ways of our heavenly Father.

LVII. DIETARY AND SANITARY LAWS

After this tragic event Moses was directed to point out to the people the so-called "dietary laws." Among the animals in the field, the fish in the sea, and the birds in the air, many kinds are men-

tioned which, being unclean, are forbidden to be eaten by the Israelites. Although we cannot always explain why such things are forbidden, still we might learn from them how good it is for us to control our appetites and to keep down the spirit of greediness within us. We have the mission to be holy people, and in aspiring to such a grand aim, we must do everything to lift up our moral and physical life above the common level. Besides, we must not merely despise unclean animals, but we must also beware of committing sins which destroy the likeness of God within us. Such sins are even worse than the partaking of forbidden food.

It was also the duty of the priest to take a most lively interest in the bodily cleanliness of the people, for "cleanliness," as an old English saying goes, "is next to godliness." It is cleanliness which, to a certain extent, has the greatest influence upon the mental and moral traits of our character. A noted modern philosopher says truly, that water is one of the greatest civilizers of man, and thus agrees with the great object of the old lawgiver, who on all occasions desired to make of his people a nation famous and noted for its clean, tidy, and neat habits.

But the priest was not only consulted in matters of bodily health, but was applied to when there was a plague or defect in the houses of the Israelites (פִּנְנֵעַ נִרְאָה לִּי בְּבֵית). We cannot praise Moses enough that he interested himself so deeply in the sanitary welfare of his people. His example may still be pointed out to-day with advantage to

the authorities in large or small cities, who do not always show the same zeal for the public health as did the old lawgiver in the ages so long passed.

Shortly after the death of Aaron's two sons, the Lord gave special directions through Moses in regard to the Most Holy of the Tabernacle. No one was allowed to enter this holy part but the high priest, Aaron, and then only once each year, on Yom-Kippur, or the Day of Atonement. Before entering the high-priest had to cleanse and wash himself. He had to strip off his priestly garments of rare value and attire himself in a dress of pure linen, in order to appear in the humblest or meekest way before God. He had to offer up a sacrifice, first, for his own sins and then for those of the people, whose forgiveness he had to implore from God. The day on which Aaron went into the Most Holy was called Yom-Kippur. It was the most solemn day of all the year. The Israelites had to afflict their souls with fasting, and had to spend the whole day, as is done to the present time, in pious thought and prayerful meditation.

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